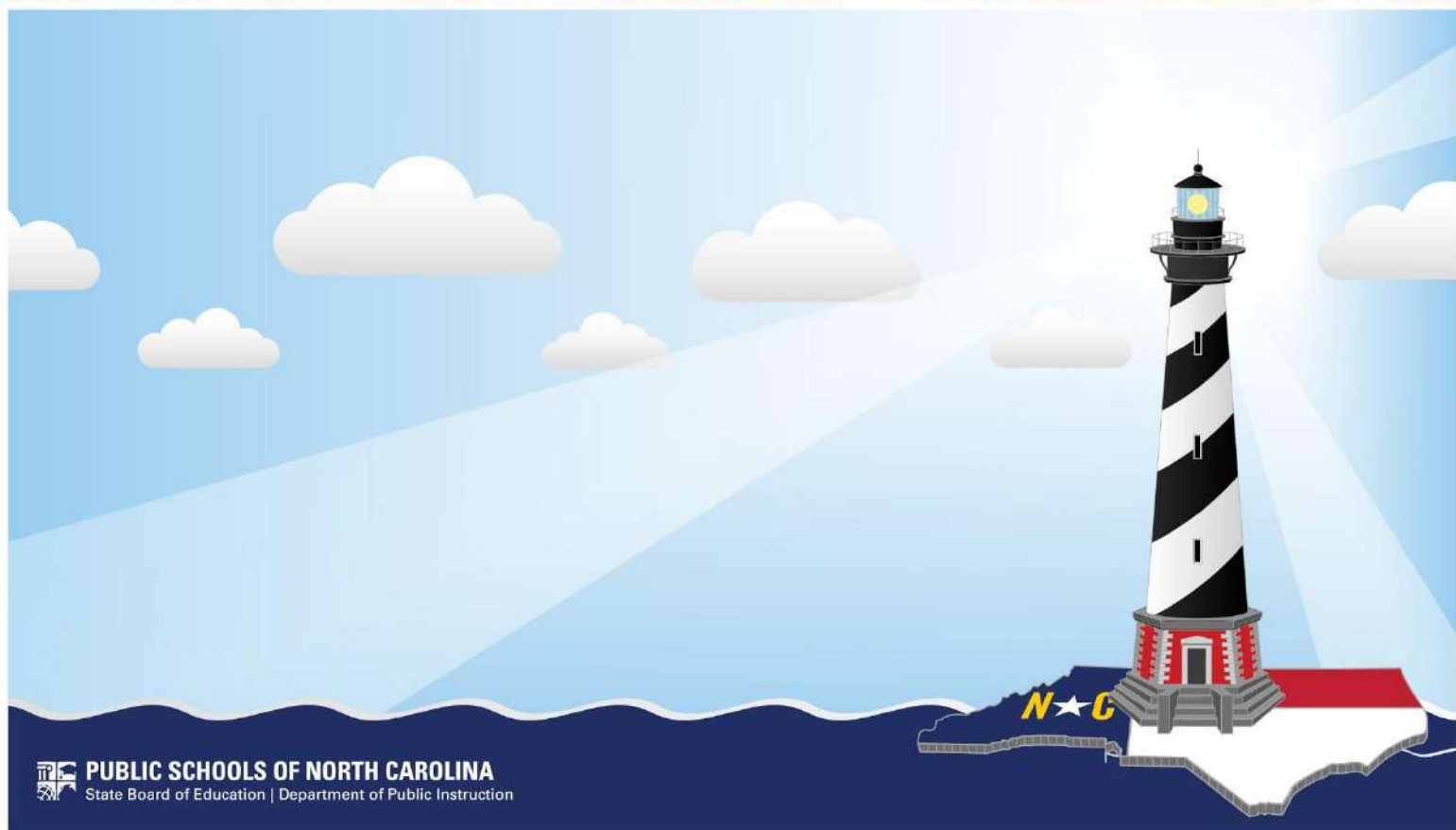# LIGHTING OUR WAY FORWARD:
North Carolina's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Board of Education (SBE) and NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), in consultation with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), have developed *Lighting Our Way Forward: North Carolina's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools* in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The purpose of this guidance document is to support NC public schools and communities in developing their plans and strategies for reopening schools in the 2020-21 school year. As public school units (PSUs) work to operationalize these recommendations, it is critical to be intentional and prepared for change as the year unfolds in light of public health needs.

Guiding Principles for Reopening Schools

NC Public Schools will
- consider the safety and wellness of students and employees, first and foremost;
- respond to the needs of vulnerable and high needs populations;
- be adaptable and flexible with the ability to move throughout the academic year from one Reopening Plan to another based on public health needs;
- synergize multiple operational and academic factors to develop effective plans;
- ensure engagement with all voices represented in the schools;
- maintain consistent communication with students, families and employees to ensure respect and success within the evolving situation.

This approach is built upon the guidance and recommendations of public health officials; it is aligned to the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) **StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12)** from June 8, 2020. It is designed to help districts prioritize the health and safety of students and teachers as they reopen school buildings and deliver instruction for the 2020-21 school year.

As statewide and local COVID-19 public health needs change over time, it is critical for all public schools to plan for a variety of learning scenarios for the 2020-21 school year. All NC public schools will need to consider multiple factors as they prepare to reopen, including community health needs, student and employee safety, operations, and teaching and learning strategies.

Lighting Our Way Forward: NC's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools provides considerations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure a safe and successful 2020-21 school year. **Except for requirements designated by executive orders issued by the Governor's Office, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina General Statutes, and North Carolina State Board of Education Policy, the guidance and recommendations contained within this document are not mandated**. Public School Units (PSUs) have the authority and the flexibility to meet their local needs and be responsive to their communities. As impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic evolve, the SBE and NCDPI will continue to provide updated guidance and recommendations to districts and schools on navigating the academic, social, and emotional effects on students and employees.

Guidance and action regarding school building closure may come in a variety of ways:
1. A statewide executive order issued by the Governor, such as Executive Order No. 117 issued on March 14, 2020
2. NC Department of Health and Human Services guidance
3. State Board of Education action
4. Local health department guidance

REOPENING PLANS AND SCHEDULING

Per the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) **StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12)** from June 8, 2020, all public schools are directed to have three plans in place to ensure continuity of educational services should the state's COVID-19 metrics change significantly requiring additional restrictions to control the spread of the disease. These Reopening Plans will be the foundation for a successful and agile academic school year. The three required Reopening Plans are:

- **Plan A:** Minimal Social Distancing
- **Plan B:** Moderate Social Distancing
- **Plan C:** Remote Learning Only

REOPENING PLANS for EDUCATION CONTINUITY

COVID-19 REOPENING PLANS	School Facilities and Students	Health Precautions *	Teaching and Learning	Scheduling Options
REOPENING PLAN A *Minimal Social Distancing*	Open All students in school at same time	Enhanced health protocols See NCDHHS requirements and recommendations	Traditional with preparation for Blended Learning	Change within day, see below
REOPENING PLAN B *Moderate Social Distancing*	Open Limit density in facilities to no greater than 50% maximum occupancy	Enhanced health protocols See NCDHHS requirements and recommendations Increased requirements in addition to Plan A	Blended Learning for all	Multiple options, see below
REOPENING PLAN C *Remote Learning*	Closed No students in school facilities	N/A All at home	Remote Learning for all	Full change to Remote Learning

*****Refer to NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) from June 8, 2020**

CRITICAL FACTORS for REOPENING PLANS

To develop the most effective Reopening Plans for 2020-21, it is critical to incorporate various factors for comprehensive planning. Below are some factors to be considered:

- **Student Health and Needs**
  - Social distancing and minimizing exposure
  - Cloth face coverings
  - Cleaning and hygiene
  - Monitoring for symptoms
  - Protecting vulnerable populations
  - School Nutrition
  - Social and emotional wellness
- **Employee Health and Needs**
  - Social distancing and minimizing exposure
  - Cloth face coverings
  - Cleaning and hygiene
  - Monitoring for symptoms
  - Protecting vulnerable populations
  - Social and emotional wellness
- **Operations**
  - School Nutrition
  - Transportation and safety
  - School facilities, water and ventilation systems
- **Communication**
  - Identify representative stakeholders
  - Ensure consistent, accurate and timely communication
  - Create structures for two-way communication
  - Anticipate and address misinformation
- **Instructional Planning**
  - Blended Learning
  - Determining student learning needs
  - Assessing formatively to inform instruction
  - Remote Instruction Plan components, see Remote Instruction Plan Guidance
  - Professional development
- **Issues of Equity and Excellence**
  - Access to devices and broadband
  - Variances of home learning environment
  - Access to quality professional development to improve quality Blended Learning
  - Resource development to improve quality Blended Learning
  - Responsiveness to student needs, such as poverty, language barriers, differentiated academic challenges. 504 Plans, etc.
- **State and Federal Regulations and Policies**
  - *Note: Updates on these topics will be provided by NCDPI when available..*
  - Summative assessments/accountability
  - CTE credentials, performance-based measurements, and state assessments
  - NC Early Learning Inventory
  - School Improvement Plan processes
  - Class-size regulations
  - Specialized services, such as Exceptional Children, Section 504 Plans, English Learners, Homeless, Academically/Intellectually Gifted, etc.
  - Enrollment and attendance issues

SCHEDULING OPTIONS FOR REOPENING PLANS

Be prepared for movement in and out of these plans if statewide COVID-19 metrics change.

REOPENING PLAN A: Minimal Social Distancing

- Least restrictive plan with social distancing required only where individuals may congregate, such as hallways, reception areas, cafeteria, restrooms, and locker rooms
- School facilities are open; all students may be in school at the same time
- Traditional instruction with preparation for Blended Learning

Within-Day Scheduling Changes:

- Minimize opportunities for close contact and the risk of exposure
  - Cafeteria closed for full capacity, could deliver to classrooms/outside areas, food is individually packaged and served to children
  - Recess could be staggered in small groups
  - Entry/Dismissal, bell schedule adapted
  - Assemblies closed for full capacity, may be all virtual, by smaller groups, etc.
  - Related service/electives adapted as possible, adults could move more than students
- Social distancing behaviors continue as recommended by state and local health authorities, such as removing groupings of desks and creating hallway floor stickers

REOPENING PLAN B: Moderate Social Distancing

- More restrictive plan
- School facilities are open but social distancing is required
- Limit density of people in school facilities to no more than 50% maximum occupancy
- Enhanced health protocols
- Blended Learning for all

For Reopening Plan B scheduling options, consider:

- Clear communication for all students, families, employees and educational partners
- Issues of transportation, bus routes, staffing, etc. for any option
- Issues of scheduling transitions, large groups, teacher movement versus student movement
- Monitoring of daily attendance for students and staff
- Course and content needs that may be difficult to offer remotely, such as courses with lab time and performance-based content like arts, Career Technical Education, PE/Health, and science courses
- Professional assignments based on ability and licensure and professional development needs
- Determination of and services for high-risk or homebound students, if medically warranted based on existing protocols
- School calendar to include transition periods to allow for scheduling evaluation, planning and transition to next operational plan

ES=Elementary School; MS=Middle School; HS=High School

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option A **By Grade Span** **By Grade Level**	ES and MS students physically attend school for regular school hours and socially distance. ES and MS students use ES, MS, and HS campuses. HS students take all courses through remote learning. HS conducts on campus labs for additional support. Some grade levels attend on-site, others remote.	ES 100% on-site MS 100% on-site High 100% remote _____ K-3 on-site 4-5 remote _____ K-4 on-site 5-8 remote _____ 9-10 on-site 11-12 remote Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	This could reduce student density by 50% on campus and on buses. Childcare issues are resolved for ES and MS because all on-site. HS content could be easier to develop into remote learning, in some instances. HS buses could be used to decrease the density of ES and MS school buses. Could reduce density by having highest need students (based on age or academic needs) on-site while others are remote. _____ More teachers could be needed for each grade span if on-site students are assigned different classrooms to limit density in classes. Academic and other needs of HS students will be significantly harder to meet if full remote learning and no on-site teaching and learning. Issues of equitable access to resources and excellent content will be a challenge for HS students. HS building changes for needs of ES and MS; including bathrooms, media resources, playgrounds, desks, table height, etc. ES and MS school needs may be harder to meet in HS building, especially issues of administration, special circumstances, custody, etc. with unfamiliar staffing. More personnel will be needed to cover students in separate locations.

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option B *Alternating Days* By one day By multiple days	• At all grade spans, students could be divided into different cohorts attending alternating days on-site and off-site. • This could be done each day or multiple days at a time. • Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	• A/B Cohorts --- • Cohort A attends M/W; remote T/TH • Cohort B attends T/TH; remote M/W • Friday is remote for all --- • Cohort A attends M/T; remote W/TH • Cohort B attends W/TH; remote M/TH • Friday is remote for all • Cohort A attends M/T; remote TH/F • Wednesday is remote for all. • Cohort B attends TH/F; remote M/T	• This could reduce student density by 50% on campus and on buses. • Facilitates direct instruction with opportunities for application of learning. • All students get to be on-site for some days with teachers and other educational staff. --- • Communication issues with cohort and day; may be confusing for students and families to know their scheduled days. • Childcare issues for off-site days; special consideration for families with multiple students will need to be considered, if possible. • Time with program specialists could be extra challenging. • Staffing assignments for off-site check-in needed; perhaps hire retired teachers for office hours during off-site days.

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option C *Alternating Weeks* By one week By two or more weeks By "track" as with year-round calendar schools	• At all grade spans, students could be divided into different cohorts attending different weeks of on-site and off-site learning.	• By one week: • Cohort A attends on-site weeks 1, 3, 5 … and remote weeks 2, 4, 6 … • Cohort B is on-site weeks 2, 4, 6 … and remote 1, 3, 5 … • By two weeks: • Cohort A attends weeks 1, 2... and remote 3, 4... • Cohort B onsite 3, 4… and remote weeks 1, 2 • To reduce density by 66%, could do three cohorts • Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	• This could reduce student density on-site and for transportation by 50%. • Facilitates direct instruction with opportunities for application of learning. • All students get to be on-site on some weeks with teachers and other educational staff. • May better meet planning needs of families for childcare and employment. Children in a family could be assigned to the same on-site times to better support scheduling. • Communication issues of cohort and week; may be confusing t for students and families to know their scheduled weeks. • Childcare issues for off-site week. • Staffing assignments for off-site student support is needed; perhaps hire retired teachers/tutors/teaching assistants/homebound teachers for office hour times for off-site weeks..

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option D *½ Day Rotation* ½ day on-site; ½ day off-site and switch	• At all levels, students would be in two cohorts. • Cohorts would be ½ day instruction on-site and ½ day off-site per day and then rotate per day.	• Cohort A attends on-site AM; off-site PM • Cohort B attends on-site PM; off-site AM • Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	• This will reduce student density by 50%. • Learning continues remotely, with some staff focused on-site and others off-site. • Facilitates direct instruction with opportunities for application of learning. • May better meet planning needs of families for childcare. Children in a family could be assigned to the same on-site times to better support scheduling. --- • Transportation, sanitation, and nutrition needs will double and be more complex. • Communication issues with cohort; may be confusing for students and families to know their scheduled days.. • Childcare issues for off-site times. • Time with program specialists could be extra challenging. • Teacher assignments for off-site times and student support needed.

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option E *Synchronous teaching*	• At all levels and all courses, teachers video stream all day for live, remote learning. • This will enable off-site and on-site teaching at the same time for students at home or in the building.	• School determines which students and staff are on-site and which are off-site. • Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	• This will reduce density depending on factors for students at-home. Allows some students to be on-site. • Allows for teaching to continue on-site and be flexible. • May work well for homebound students, could assign an in-school buddy. • May work better for HS. --- • Need for significant equipment, security, and significant broadband at school and at home. May require additional IT staff/assistance. • Ensuring off-site students have needed materials for all learning activities. • Child-care issues for off-site times. • Determining which students are on-site and off-site may be complex.

PLAN B SCHEDULING OPTIONS	Description	Examples (not exhaustive)	Benefits/Challenges (not exhaustive)
Option F *Hybrid* No single option fits the needs of your LEA/Charter Combination of options	• Combination of options above based on local needs. • At all levels, based on needs of students and teachers, primarily medical with regard to self-reported high-risk status for COVID-19 exposure. • Certain courses/content could be done off-site while others can be done on-site.	• School determines which students and/or courses are on-site and which are remote. • Facilitate self-report or confidential student, family, and staff survey to accommodate individuals deemed at high-risk for severe disease from COVID-19 exposure who may prefer to be remote. • Facilitate remote instruction for any student screened out of on-site instruction due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure.	• This could reduce density. • Could match high-risk students with high-risk teachers. • Could respond to needs of content and courses. • Childcare needs may be met. • May support local needs and creative options of combining across campuses and/or needs. --- • Complex management of various scheduling and student options. • Challenging to maintain if needs change of students and/or teachers. • Communication issues.

REOPENING PLAN C: Remote Learning Only

- School facilities are closed; No students or employees in school buildings
- Remote learning for all students, based on Remote Instruction Plans (SPLN-006) submitted on July 20, 2020, to NCDPI as a framework for quality remote learning

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

This Student Health and Safety section is extensive but not exhaustive. National, state and local guidance should always be consulted for the most up-to-date requirements and recommendations. **Please continue to check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the NC DHHS site for current requirements and recommendations.**

In addition to requirements/recommendations below,
Overall Considerations:

- Collaborate with local health department to develop a process for closing schools
- Develop a response team and identify a COVID point person for each school
- Identify and/or provide professional development on protocols
- Support Social Emotional Learning and resilience
- Streamline communication in collaboration with community partners.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING EXPOSURE

is a key tool to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing ("physical distancing") means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
NCDHHS Requirements	**NCDHHS Requirements**	**NCDHHS Requirements**
• Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas.	**Adhere to all requirements outlined in Plan A AND:**	Follow all social distancing requirements for anyone entering the building.
• Mark 6 feet of spacing to remind students and staff to always stay 6 feet apart in lines and at other times when they may congregate.	• Ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people at all times in school facilities and on school transportation vehicles.	
• Provide marks on the floors of restrooms and locker rooms to indicate proper social distancing.	• Limit density of people in school facilities and transportation vehicles to no greater than 50% maximum occupancy to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet apart between people.	
• Limit nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations.		
• Have staff monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from the vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa.		
• Discontinue the use of any self-service food or beverage distribution in the cafeteria (e.g., food should be individually wrapped or served/handed directly to students) or at an event outside the typical school day. As always, ensure the safety of children with food allergies.		

SOCIAL DISTANCING and MINIMIZING EXPOSURE Considerations for Operationalizing	
Cafeteria Eat-in classrooms Limit cafeteria visits to cohorts / individual classes **Minimize large group gatherings in the cafeteria**	**Create a system of taking lunch orders and eating in classrooms:** • If social distancing is not possible in the cafeteria, have meals delivered to the classroom or have students bring food from the cafeteria back to their classrooms to eat. • Provide frequent reminders, including signage, for students and staff to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another when feasible. • Paper or E-Form that is sent by each classroom to the cafeteria at the agreed time. • Staggering time for classroom helpers to come and get orders; Have floor stickers to indicate where helpers can stand in line to pick up meals. • Designate traffic flow as one-way, posting directional reminders on the walls and/or floor. • Have extra-large trash bags available in each classroom with set times for picking up • Coordinate times for hand washing before and after lunch. **Limit cafeteria visits to cohorts/ individual classes and allow certain limited classrooms to eat in classroom-based on need, age or space of the room:** • Designate traffic flow as one-way, posting directional reminders on the walls and/or floor. • Use plexiglass partitions for cafeteria staff interfacing directly with students and school staff.
Hallways **Minimize the number of students in hallways**	• Create a staggered arrival and departure schedule. • Provide frequent reminders, including signage, for students and staff to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another when feasible. • Designate hallways as one-way, posting directional reminders on the walls and/or floor. • Keep students and teachers in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible during the day, and from day to day. Limit mixing between cohort groups as much as possible (i.e., during recess, lunch in the cafeteria, arrival and dismissal, etc.) • Stagger locker assignments to minimize contact.

CLEANING AND HYGIENE

Washing hands with soap for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of disease.
Applies to all Reopening Plans

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirements:

- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues).

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children.

- Increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

  ○ Supervise use of hand sanitizer by students.

  ○ Ensure that children with skin reactions and contraindications to hand sanitizer use soap and water.

  ○ Reinforce handwashing during key times such as: Before, during and after preparing food; Before eating food; After using the toilet; After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals.

- Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at every building entrance and exit, in the cafeteria and in every classroom for safe use by staff and older students.

- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.

- Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into classroom activity.

- Allow time between activities for proper cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.

- Establish a schedule for and perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, stair rails, faucet handles, toilet handles, playground equipment, drinking fountains, light switches, desks, tables, chairs, kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, carts, and trays) with an EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increasing frequency of disinfection during high-density times and disinfect all shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) between use.

  ○ Paper-based materials, such as books and loose-leaf paper, are not considered high-risk for COVID-19 transmission, and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.

- Limit sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils.

- Keep students' personal items separate and in individually labeled cubbies, containers or lockers.

- Limit use of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between uses or provide adequate supplies to assign for individual student use.

- Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are minimally handled and washed with hot water and soap or in a dishwasher, or use disposable food service items such as plates and utensils.

- It is **recommended** that schools:

  - Avoid shared use of soft or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, (e.g., stuffed toys, clay).

  - For resources for teaching hand washing: See Healthful Living Standards and Resources.

Considerations for Operationalizing

Consult CDC guidelines to guide the following:

- Provide guidance to parents/families on specific types of hand sanitizer.

- Provide guidance to parents/families to self-identify as sensitive to alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

- Identify students with these sensitivities and provide other hygienic opportunities.

- Consider beginning the school year teaching the Essential Standards for Healthful Living on handwashing and the prevention of communicable disease.

- Create a schedule/chart for checking hand sanitizing stations regularly throughout the day.

- Assign monitors at handwashing stations throughout the day (consider using parent volunteers).

- Create a master schedule that allows for cleaning and sanitizing in between classes, at the beginning and end of days, etc.

- Create a plan for trash removal throughout the day and identify additional staff/volunteers as needed.

- Consider assigning specific content-area teacher leads for cleaning materials in their areas.

- Consider providing communications (e.g., posters, videos, etc.) using reputable sources e.g., CDC Posters, Factsheets, and Videos, Communications

- Consult CDC and EPA Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting.

MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS

Conducting regular screenings for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. If a student develops symptoms, while at school, he/she must notify an adult immediately. More information on how to monitor for symptoms is available from the CDC.

Applies to all Reopening Plans

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirements:

Enforce that staff and students stay home if:

- They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return.

- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return.

Conduct symptom screening of any person entering the building, including students, staff, family members, and other visitors. Screening may be provided at the school entrance, during arrival at school, or upon boarding school transportation.

- Example screening tools:

  ○ Symptom Screening Checklist: Elementary School Students (English | Spanish). Designed to be administered to person dropping off a young child.

  ○ Symptom Screening Checklist: Middle and High School Students or Any Person Entering the Building (English | Spanish). Designed to be administered to any person middle-school-aged or older, including students, staff, families, or visitors.

Conduct daily temperature screenings for all people entering the school facility or boarding school transportation (see note below on optional parent/guardian attestation).

- Fever is determined by a measured temperature of 100.4 °F or greater.

- Individuals waiting to be screened must stand six feet apart from each other. Use tape or other markers on the floor for spacing.

- The staff person taking temperatures must wear a cloth face covering, and must stay six feet apart unless taking temperature.

- Use a touchless thermometer if available.

- If not available, use a tympanic (ear), digital axillary (under the arm), or temporal (forehead) thermometer. Use disposable thermometer covers that are changed between uses.

- Do not take temperatures orally (under the tongue) because of the risk of spreading COVID-19 from respiratory droplets from the mouth.

- Staff person must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before touching the thermometer.

- Staff person must wear gloves if available and change between direct contact with individuals, and must wash hands or use hand sanitizer after removing gloves.

- Staff person must clean and sanitize the thermometer using manufacturer's instructions between each use.

Schools may choose to utilize a parent/guardian attestation of a symptom screening for their child in lieu of in-person screening for students who are boarding school transportation. However, a student whose parent/guardian submitted an attestation must be screened upon arrival at the school building.

- Example: Parent/Guardian Attestation (Available on pages 18 and 19 of the NCDHHS Toolkit).

HANDLING SUSPECTED, PRESUMPTIVE, OR CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19
Applies to all Reopening Plans

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirements:

- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter. Examples of signage such as Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms flyers (English - Color, Black & White; Spanish - Color, Black & White).

- Educate staff, students and their families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when they can return to school.

- Establish a dedicated space for symptomatic individuals that will not be used for other purposes.

- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals to the designated area at the school, and send them home to isolate.

- Ensure symptomatic student remains under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. The supervising adult should wear cloth face covering or a surgical mask.

- Require the symptomatic person to wear a cloth face covering or a surgical mask while waiting to leave the facility.

  ○ Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

    ■ Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.

    ■ Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

    ■ Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.

- Require school nurses or delegated school staff need to provide direct patient care to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE. Refer to the Infection Control Supplies Checklist for type of PPE needed.

- Implement cleaning and disinfecting procedures following CDC guidelines.

- Have a plan for how to transport an ill student or staff member home or to medical care.

- Adhere to the following process for allowing a student or staff member to return to school.

  ○ If a person has had a negative COVID-19 test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours.

  ○ If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until they (or a family member if younger child) can answer YES to the following three questions:

  1. Has it been at least 10 days since the child first had symptoms?

  2. Has it been at least 3 days since the child had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine)?

  3. Has it been at least 3 days since the child's symptoms have improved, including cough and shortness of breath?

- Suggest aligning with child care guidance: "Notify local health authorities of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children and staff (as required by NCGS § 130A-136.)"

- Ensure that if a person with COVID-19 was in the school setting while infectious, school administrators coordinate with local health officials to notify staff and families immediately while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS 130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

- If a student/employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they must remain out of school until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

- If a student/employee that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, they are not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.

- If a student/employee has been determined to have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain out of school for 14 days since the last date of exposure unless they test positive. In which case, exclusion criteria above would apply. They must complete the full 14 days of quarantine, even if they test negative.

- Provide remote learning options for students unable to be at school due to illness or exposure.

It is **recommended** that schools:

- Establish and enforce sick policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:

  ○ Enforcing staff staying home if sick.

  ○ Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.

- Establish and encourage liberal use of sick days for students and discontinue attendance-dependent awards and ratings.

- Develop plans for backfilling positions of employees on sick leave and consider cross-training to allow for changes of staff duties.

HANDLING SUSPECTED, PRESUMPTIVE, OR CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19

Considerations for Operationalizing

- Maximize the use of the school nurse in managing the process for managing symptom-positive students and staff for support in quarantine, recovery and return to school.

- Consider one person to monitor and track symptom-positive cases in students and staff.

- Provide education on protocols for removing symptom-positive individuals to parents, families, students, and staff.

- Support COVID-19 efforts as related to school population (may manage process at the school level if one nurse per school):

  ○ Organize and train school-level COVID-19 designated contacts if nurse is assigned to multiple schools.

  ○ Organize and train designated staff for symptom screening or identification.

  ○ Implement/oversee school-level procedure for symptom positive students and staff.

  ○ Train designated staff for management and referral of symptom-positive students in absence of nurse.

  ○ Collaborate with the local health department (LHD) in assuring notification for positive cases in school and contact tracing.

○ Collaborate with LHD for vaccine administration opportunities (flu, required vaccines, etc.)

COMMUNICATION AND COMBATING MISINFORMATION

Help ensure that the information staff, students, families are getting is coming directly from reliable sources. Use resources from a trusted resource like the CDC and NCDHHS to promote behaviors to prevent the spread of COVID-19. *Applies to all Reopening Plans*

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirements:

Disseminate COVID-19 information and combat misinformation through multiple channels to staff, students and families. Ensure that families are able to access communication channels to appropriate staff at the school with questions and concerns.

- Some reliable sources include: NC DHHS COVID-19 Webpage, Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash, NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates, NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources, and the additional resources listed at the end of this guidance document.

Put up signs, posters, and flyers at main entrances and in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities such as those found on the Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19 to remind students and staff to use face coverings, wash hands, and stay six feet apart whenever possible (Wear, Wait, Wash).

- Know Your W's signs are available in English and Spanish.

- Teach students who cannot yet read what the signs' language and symbols mean.

It is **recommended** that schools:

Make reliable, age-appropriate, and culturally responsive information available to students, families, and staff about COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies, using methods such as sharing resources through social media, newsletters that include videos, hosting online webinars, or distributing printed materials like FAQs.

Share regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA systems.

Include messages and updates about stopping the spread of COVID-19 in routine communications with staff, students and families, such as in newsletters, emails, and online.

Involve students' families in outreach by utilizing the PTA or other local groups/organizations to support disseminating important information on COVID-19.

Considerations for Operationalizing

Disseminate COVID-19 information and combat misinformation through multiple channels to staff, students and families. Ensure that families are able to access communication channels to appropriate staff at the school with questions and concerns.

- NC DHHS COVID-19 Webpage

- CDC

Ensure communication channels to *streamline* consistent COVID-19 related communication for all staff, students, and families in an age-appropriate manner.

- Consider multiple channels, e.g., email, website, announcements, social media, etc.

- Place posters in high-traffic areas.

- Use videos to convey practices, e.g., hand-washing, distancing guidelines, etc.

- Make materials available in multiple languages of your community.

- Ensure communications appropriate to students and families with disabilities.

- Include feedback loops from stakeholders to inform communications.

  - CDC Posters, Factsheets, and Videos and Communications

Incorporate COVID-19 Specific Guidance Into NC Essential Standards for Healthful Living (K-12).

- Healthful Living Standards and Resources.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH, SAFETY & SUPPORT

Maintaining employee health is a critical component of a PSU's Reopening Plan. A comprehensive plan for monitoring and preventing COVID-19 exposure will help ensure that PSUs have an adequate workforce to support student learning, as well as minimizing employee anxiety and loss of work days.

The Employee Health, Safety and Support section is focused on procedures and policies that support employee health and safety with the reopening of schools during COVID-19. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance for employers related to COVID-19, Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act and What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws. It is recommended that PSUs refer to this guidance in developing procedures for identifying employees who might be exposed to COVID-19 while maintaining employee's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is important to note that education leaders should consult with their local board attorney during the development of any new procedures or policies.

Note: Plans A and B are often merged since the action steps are the same for employees when requiring minimal or moderate social distancing.

Reopening Plans: Employee Health, Safety & Support

MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS

Per NCDHHS, each PSU is required to publish a process of monitoring for symptoms. These procedures need to be clear and aligned with the requirements from NCDHHS. In addition, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance for employers related to COVID-19, Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Refer to this guidance in developing procedures for identifying employees who might be exposed to COVID-19 while maintaining employee's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, the CDC provides several resources to aid employees in self-monitoring for illness. Conducting regular screening for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Monitoring for symptoms applies for plans A and B.. Employees, even those in a remote working situation, are encouraged to notify their employers should they experience COVID-19 symptoms.

PLAN A	PLAN B
NCDHHS Requirements	

Enforce that staff stay home if:

- They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return.

- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return.

Conduct symptom screening of any person entering the building (including parents, central office employees, delivery and postal workers, etc.).

Conduct temperature screenings for all people who enter the school facility or board school transportation (including drivers). If a staff member's temperature measures 100.4^0 F, or greater, the staff member must remain isolated, and return home at the direction of the employer or local health department official.

Considerations for Operationalizing

Conduct regular screening for symptoms to help reduce exposure. Provide staff members with a symptom guide from NCDHHS: NCDHHS Symptom Fliers.

- If a staff member develops symptoms while at school, develop a clear process for staff to immediately notify his or her supervisor (or school health designee), remain isolated and return home at the direction of the employer or local health department official.

- Provide temperature screenings as part of daily "report-to-work" routine.

NCDHHS Recommendations

Provide all employees with a list of the most common COVID-19 symptoms. The following link provides easy-to-read graphics (in English and Spanish) that can be disseminated through email or social media platforms: NCDHHS Symptom Fliers

Develop "coverage" plans for all employees given that severe COVID-19 symptoms may prevent employees working remotely from fulfilling their job duties.

Considerations for Operationalizing

- Please consult the NCDHHS Tool Kit located here NCDHHS Toolkit

- Develop a self-monitoring checklist for exposure to COVID 19. Several examples are provided in the DHHS toolkit referenced above.

- Discuss symptoms and safety via a staff meeting (in small groups or virtually). Use charts provided in the toolkit.

- Create a plan or flowchart with local health authorities to determine when employees may return to work if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19

- For resources related to informing employees about best practices related to COVID-19,

PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance for employers related to COVID-19, Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Refer to this guidance in developing procedures for identifying employees who might be exposed to COVID-19 while maintaining employee's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Additionally, EEOC has issued a special communication to accompany this document in the FAQ style to assist employers, What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws.

For more information on who may be in a vulnerable population, refer to the CDC site entitled People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions. This information provides strategies for specific medical conditions.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
NCDHHS Requirement Create a process for staff to self-identify as high-risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 and have a plan in place to address requests for alternative work arrangements or re-assignments.		Remote Learning only
Considerations for Operationalizing		
• Develop a process that provides clear guidelines for employees to notify supervisors if they self-identify as high risk and are requesting considerations of reasonable accommodation. • Develop policy around requirements for medical documentation following an employee's self-identification of high risk status; such a policy would require uniform application for all employees of the PSU. • Develop protocols for reporting COVID-19 exposure/symptoms that preserve staff privacy and minimize stigma. Establish guidelines on how long employees remain out of work once the employee has met the criteria for illness. Refer to the CDC's guidelines for self-isolation in developing self-isolation plans – CDC Isolation Guidelines. Require a note from a medical professional as a condition of returning to work following isolation due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure; such a policy would require uniform application for all employees of the PSU.		
	• Follow all guidelines under Plan A as well as these additional considerations: • Develop a decision matrix for how employees will be assigned to either face-to-face or remote learning assignments during Blended Learning.	• Identify mandatory employees who will be required to report to the school setting. • Develop a decision matrix for how employees will be assigned to either

	• Consider an employee's high-risk status in the decision matrix and consult with the local board attorney to review the process and approve. • Communicate the criteria for the decision matrix clearly to all employees.	mandatory or non-mandatory status. • Consider an employee's high-risk status in the decision matrix and consult with the board attorney to review the process and approve. • Communicate clearly the criteria for the decision matrix to all employees.
PLAN A	**PLAN B**	**PLAN C**

Considerations for Operationalizing		

• Establish and publish local leave and return-to-work policies in consultation with the local board of education and board attorney.

• Publish these new policies and hold webinars to answer questions related to leave.

• Publish an FAQ based on the questions and comments raised in the webinar with employees. Prominently display FAQ on PSU website.

• Develop cleaning protocols informed by NCDHHS guidelines for all employees in their workspaces and throughout the building (e.g., employee/student restrooms, common lounge areas, individual and shared classrooms, office supply areas, copy machines, etc.). If employees share computers or other supplies, create graphics to illustrate the appropriate cleaning protocols that must occur before entering or using a shared workspace.		
	• Develop a questionnaire to assist in determining which employees will be assigned on-site and remote working placements. The questionnaire may include high-risk status (a general indication of any of the listed items, not specific factors), access to reliable broadband, specific training and/or skill with remote instruction, access to required software/hardware, etc. Vet all items on the questionnaire with the EEOC guidance provided above and board attorney. • Meet with the local board attorney and develop a decision matrix for determining who will work remotely and who will be required to be at the school.	• Meet with a board attorney and develop a decision matrix for determining which employees will be designated as "mandatory employees". • Develop an FAQ to fully communicate how the determination of mandatory employee status was determined. • Publish these new policies and hold webinars to answer questions related to leave. • Publish an FAQ based on the questions and comments raised in the webinar with employees. Prominently display FAQ on PSU website.

EMPLOYEE COPING AND RESILIENCE

Provide opportunities for employees to cope with stress and anxiety during this challenging time, whether they are isolated and teaching remotely or in a traditional environment with additional health and safety concerns.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirement

Provide staff, families, and students (if age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness (e.g., 211 and Hope4NC Helpline 1-855-587-3463)

Recommendations

- Develop a plan to ensure that employees' have access to mental wellness services.
- Conduct ongoing regular training among all staff on updated health and safety protocols.

Considerations for Operationalizing

- Ensure that EAP services can meet increased demand and/or provide access to free services as identified by the NCDHHS - NCDHHS Wellness Resources
- Make demonstrating safety and hygiene protocols a required component of faculty, department, and PLC meetings.
- Partner with other institutions in the community to promote factual communication and cooperation in responding to COVID-19.

Other Critical Reference Information:

Hiring Process Considerations for Summer and Fall 2020

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance for employers related to COVID-19, Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act and What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws. Refer to this guidance in developing procedures for hiring while respecting prospective employee's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The EEOC provides guidance for employers on pre-employment screening and other onboarding issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is recommended that PSUs consult with their board attorney on local policy related to recruitment and selection of personnel.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDPI Recommendations

- Encourage the use of virtual interviewing processes for potential new hires.
- Conduct pre-service health checks for current employees who will be returning to work after the March 2020 school closures.
- Consider data privacy of new employees and use secure file transfer protocols when requesting documents with personally identifiable information (PII) from prospective employees. Email is not a secure form of document transfer.

- Revisit health/safety protocols with new hires before those new hires report to orientation and/or job assignments.

Considerations for Operationalizing

- Develop guidance documents for hosting interviews via webinar or another online platform. If virtual interviewing is not possible, create a protocol for performing an in-person interview that meets NCDHHS guidelines for social distancing.

- Meet with the local board attorney to determine policy changes that may be necessary for recruitment and selection of personnel.

- Work with background check vendors to ensure that the vendors are using NCDHHS approved safety protocols when interacting with potential hires.

- Encourage employees to maintain sensible social distancing practices between the time of job offer and reporting to work. Ask new hires to complete another health attestation form before reporting to job location.

- Consult with local board attorney and IT Department to ensure that secure file transfer protocols meet standards for ensuring employee privacy and protection against breach of data.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE

The North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual governs the use of employee leave in PSUs and several provisions below apply to school reopening in the fall. In some specific cases, the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) may supersede the state policy manual.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) - PSUs are encouraged to communicate the regulations of this federal program to their employees. For employees who meet the requirements for accessing the FFCRA leave, this federal leave can preserve an employee's accrued leave balance (state) should the employee be required to leave work due to COVID-19. PSUs are encouraged to work with the Financial and Business Services Office of NCDPI to understand how this federal leave is coded. FFCRA leave allows for up to two-thirds pay for employees who request leave for COVID-19 related child-care closures. This leave may be supplemented with an employee's accrued sick leave as appropriate. PSUs are encouraged to review local leave policies to ensure that employees may use hours of sick leave (as opposed to half or full days) to ensure that employees are not required to use more sick leave than necessary to maintain full salary while using FFCRA leave. PSUs might also consider allowing employees to convert annual leave to sick leave (where necessary) to maintain full salary while using FFCRA leave.

Sick Leave (Section 4.1) - Employees, or their immediate family members, who are experiencing an illness (COVID-19 or other) may use sick leave during the time of illness. PSUs are encouraged to set policy guidelines on when (i.e., after how many days of illness) an employee is required to provide medical documentation. Anxiety related to working during a pandemic does not qualify as an acceptable use of sick leave except where accompanied by documentation by a medical professional. Employees who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and are asymptomatic may use sick leave if approved for self-isolation by the PSU.

Annual Vacation Leave (Section 3.1.3) - Employees who qualify for sick leave, but do not have sufficient sick leave to cover the term of the illness, may elect to use annual vacation leave during an approved illness.

Extended Sick Leave (Section 4.2) - Employees who are out for an approved illness who do not have sufficient sick leave/annual leave to cover the term of the illness, may request extended sick leave upon the approval of the PSU. Employees do not need to exhaust unused required annual leave days when

determining eligibility for extended sick leave. PSUs are required to apply the required substitute deduction ($50) for employees using extended sick leave.

Voluntary Shared Leave (Section 4.3) - an employee may qualify for (and use) voluntary shared leave if the employee's request is approved by the superintendent (or comparable head of the PSU) for COVID-19 related absences. All other requirements for use of this leave (as outlined in Section 4.3) must be followed by the PSU.

FMLA (Section 8.2) - While FMLA is not a form of leave, a PSU has the right to designate an employee's absence due to a COVID-19-related absence as an FMLA-qualifying event.

Contagious Disease (Section 9.4.1) - Employees who are under orders of the director of a county health department to leave the work environment, the local superintendent shall: a) reassign the employ to a safe work environment (as agreed to by the director of the county health department, or b) place the employee on leave with pay for the period of time as indicated by the director of the health department. The leave provisions under Section 9.4.1 can only be initiated by the director of the health department, not the PSU. PSUs are encouraged to establish a formal point of contact with their local health departments in order to make a formal determination of the need for an employee to leave work due to possible COVID-19 exposure.

COVID-19 Emergency Leave (Section 9.4.2) - *the provisions of this section expire on June 15, 2020 and cannot be used by PSUs or their employees unless SBE policy, legislative action or executive order indicates otherwise*.

Considerations for Employee Leave:

- Develop a guide in order to communicate the FFCRA and state policy information regarding leave. Specifically, employees should be notified that the emergency leave from the original school closures (March 10, 2020) is no longer available.

- Develop forms or processes, if needed, to request leave, voluntary shared leave and/or FMLA.

- Assign a district-level employee as the point of contact for schools to determine what types of leave are available to employees under a specific set of circumstances. The district-level employee should be the point of contact with NCDPI on questions of employee leave and eligibility during the 2020-2021 school year.

Note: Employee Leave Guidance was drafted according to the current NC State Board of Education (NC SBE) policies. Leave policies may be amended by the NC SBE in response to COVID-19 conditions before or during the 2020-21 school year.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

It is important to understand that nearly one in five North Carolina students have at least one emotional, behavioral or developmental disability (Splett, 2014). Moreover, the trauma experienced by students during the COVID-19 outbreak has the potential to exacerbate this already significant issue. Therefore, it is critical that school leaders carefully consider allocation of resources to prevent and respond to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and student mental health issues during the reopening of NC's public schools.

Critical Factors for Effective Implementation:

- Use *existing* teaming structures (e.g., MTSS Teams, Crisis Response Teams, etc.) to carry out this work. New work teams do not need to be developed and mobilized.

- Make professional development opportunities accessible to the appropriate school staff. Simply providing documents without training and job-embedded follow up leads to little, if any, behavioral change among students and staff. Ongoing training and coaching will be provided by NCDPI in a regional teaming structure to support the practices and strategies below.

- Refer to existing resources to begin planning and implementing how to best support students with SEL and mental health. A list of accessible key products is located here.

These Social Emotional Learning and Student Mental Health strategies and practices are intended for PSU leadership to meet the social-emotional needs of students during phases of school closure, remote learning, and re-opening. A more thorough treatment of these strategies and practices is available at the *North Carolina Social Emotional Learning COVID-19 Practice Guide.*

This complete practice guide is located at: https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncdpiselremotelearning

From the NC SEL COVID-19 Practice Guide

Recommendation to Support SEL and Student Mental Health

- Conduct a needs assessment

- Engage in resource mapping

- Formalize a protocol for student triage/risk assessment when needed

- Formalize and explicitly teach behavioral expectations for public health and remote learning

- Provide ongoing adult self-care and support

- Develop supports for re-entry in brick-and-mortar buildings

To the extent possible, the strategies and practices contained below are intentionally aligned to the public health requirements and recommendations and are evidence-based and trauma informed.

Supporting Student Mental Health

COPING AND RESILIENCE

The outbreak of COVID-19 can be stressful for many. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Schools can play an important role in helping students and staff cope and build resilience to support the well-being of the school community.

The same requirement applies to all three Reopening Plans.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
NCDHHS Requirement Provide staff, families, and students (if age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness (e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline 1-855-587-3463).	**Recommendations** Increase capacity to deliver social support services by increasing the number of on-site social workers; which can also support off-site needs as well. Encourage staff, students, and families to talk with people they trust about their concerns about COVID-19 and how they are feeling.	
Considerations for Operationalizing Needs Assessment Complete a Needs Assessment to assess community, family, school, and student needs during COVID-19 school closures. A needs assessment is the foundation for any school response/service array and is a continuous process to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the services for the duration of the effort. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a good guiding structure to use as teams gather data, thinking first through the basic physiological and safety needs such as food, shelter, clothing, employment, and medical care, including mental wellness. **Resource Mapping** Engage in Resource Mapping which is "a system-building process historically utilized by communities, organizations, schools, and service centers to align resources, strategies, and outcomes available" (Crane & Mooney, 2005). **Formalize a Process for Student and Staff Risk**	**Considerations for Operationalizing** **Leverage all Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)** Maximize PSU capacity by having SISP: • Train other staff on student and family check-ins • Train staff on indicators of mental health • Train staff on universal coping and resiliency skills • Train staff on suicide risk assessment • Provide therapy and teletherapy, when appropriately licensed and credentialed **Communicate with Staff, Students, and Families Concerning the Importance of Social-Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health** • To promote and model self care, implement the SEL 3 Signature Practices with staff and students • Develop systematic communication with families concerning the status of key scheduling changes through a formal and regularly scheduled communication protocol • Share vetted self-care resources with staff and students **Develop, Teach, and Model Behavioral Expectations for Each Reopening Plan** • If a school already has a behavior matrix for the brick-and-mortar	

Assessment

- Develop and train staff on a process for student and staff risk assessment. A sample plan can be found here (credit: Rockingham County Schools).

- Formalize the risk assessment that will be used. Key points for the development of a risk protocol can be found here.

- Formalize internal response or referral process when students are identified as at risk.

- Develop a written signed Memorandum of Agreement with an outside mental health provider before a referral form is completed. An example MOA can be found here.

- Schedule standing team meetings on the calendar for crisis responders to meet and problem solve systemic and individual concerns. Guidance for structuring these meetings can be found here (credit: Cleveland County Schools).

setting, students will benefit from the use of consistent language across the physical and online settings. Within the matrix, specific online activities or software applications can be used as the setting. Specific directions for creating a behavior matrix for remote learning can be found here.

- For student safety measures, it should never be assumed that students have a common understanding of the expectation. Operationally defining and explicitly teaching them, not simply posting, will allow students the opportunity to reach a common understanding. Examples of teaching behaviors can be found here.

- Implement core SEL practices. Strategies for implementing core SEL practices can be found here.

- Consider the use of student perception surveys to obtain a better understanding of students' sense of health and well-being at school. An example of a student perception survey can be found here.

OPERATIONS: Facilities

North Carolina school facilities first closed in March 2020 through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year to curb the spread of COVID-19. As we prepare to transition back into the learning environment, school facilities need to be clean and safe for students and educators with a physical setting that is appropriate and adequate for learning. Improving the quality of school facilities will be an arduous and expensive undertaking. However, PSU actions will provide a safe, healthy environment and advance positive impacts for both employees and students within the school facility.

Guiding Questions to Consider:

- What should we do to prepare our facilities to be safe and clean from COVID-19?

- What training do we need to provide training for our custodians as they prepare to clean our facilities to be safe from the COVID-19?

- What checklists do we need to create to ensure all areas are cleaned at the set intervals?

- Can we contract with a professional cleaning company or service to clean our school buildings?

- Are there additional funding sources available to support our cleanup efforts?

- How will PSUs coordinate supplies, cleaning protocols and other safety measures in light of COVID-19?

FACILITIES	PLAN A	PLAN B
Classroom Size and Space	To ensure effective classroom protections from the COVID-19 disease, it is **required** that schools: - Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children. - Allow time between classroom activities for proper cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces Limit sharing of personal items and supplies in the classroom such as writing utensils. - Keep students' personal items separate and in individually labeled cubbies, containers, or lockers. - Limit use of classroom material to small groups and disinfect between uses or provide adequate supplies to assign for individual student use. To minimize the spread of illness, the following **considerations** in the classroom may be helpful: - Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbie, or areas. - Provide bottled water or allow students and staff to bring water bottles or containers from home. - Ensure students don't share water bottles. - Addressing any screening policy should take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students when they are in the classroom setting. - Alternate recess to minimize the numbers of students on the playground, require social distancing and disinfect equipment between classes. - Do not use larger playground equipment that cannot be disinfected between uses until social distancing requirements can be eased.	

- Close communal-use shared spaces such as cafeterias and playgrounds with shared playground equipment if possible; otherwise, stagger use and clean and disinfect between use.

- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks, especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.

- Reconfigure seating arrangements to allow for physical space - Decrease class sizes when possible to allow for more physical space between students in the classroom setting. - Limit mixing between groups if possible. - Limit the number of people in a classroom as well as the number of people entering and exiting the space during the day.	- Arrange seating/desks to allow for physical distancing. NCDHHS recommends at least 6 feet apart when feasible. (NCDHHS) - Assign seating to help track virus spread if a student/staff tests positive for COVID-19. - Turn desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart. - Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least six feet apart (i.e., reception desks). - Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (i.e., guides for creating "one way routes" in hallways). - Modified layouts should consider preschool center-based designs into consideration, where appropriate. - Reconfigure seating arrangements - Decrease class sizes as much as possible to allow for more physical space between students in the classroom setting. - Do not mix groups if possible. - Limit the number of people in a classroom as well as the number of people entering and exiting the space during the day.

Signage	**NCDHHS Requirement:**
	• Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter. Examples of signage such as Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms flyers (English - Color, Black & White; Spanish - Color, Black & White).
	• Put up signs, posters and flyers at the main entrances and in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities such as those found on the Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/social-media-toolkit.html) to remind students and staff to wear face coverings, wash hands and stay 6 feet apart whenever possible (Wear, Wait, Wash).
	Considerations for Operationalizing
	• Consider posting appropriate signage: See CDC Signs Link.
	• Do not cover any existing required signage and safety instructions.
	• Ensure signage is consistent within all schools and among LEAs.
	• Post signage in classrooms, hallways and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols.
	• Post signs in highly visible locations (i.e., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.
	• Find free CDC print and digital resources on CDC's communication resources main page.
	• Review some ADHS Resources such Stop the Spread of Germs and Know the Symptoms of COVID-19
	• Consider feeder schools when developing messaging, so that students are seeing the same messaging across families.
	• Consider the home language of students and families when posting signs and sending messages.
	• Consider ADA signage requirements- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates certain characteristics of signs that designate permanent rooms or spaces and signs that provide directions or information. Some include:
	○ Permanent room identification signs must have raised, uppercase copy at least 5⁄8-inch high but no higher than 2 inches. Grade 2 Braille must accompany the copy.
	○ Overhead signs must have a 3-inch high copy minimum.
	○ Contrast. The contrast between the background of the sign and the copy color must be 70% dar-to- light or light-to-dark because the contrast improves legibility, especially for people with visual impairments.
	○ Examine sign content, location and context within the facility.
	○ Keep the amount of information on each sign reasonable. If a sign lists 15 things in a row, people are less likely to pay attention to it.
	○ Where long lists cannot be avoided, present the information in a simple, organized manner.
	○ Double check to be sure signs are being installed in the correct locations.

	o Ensure signs and messaging are provided in alternative formats to successfully communicate information to individuals whose primary language is not English and to individuals with hearing or vision impairment.
Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Sanitizing Buildings and Facilities	Cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing should be performed at all facilities on a scheduled, routine basis by trained personnel, including faculty and staff where appropriate to do so. To ensure effective cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing of building and facilities, it is **required** that schools: ● Establish a schedule to perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html) and (https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm) of high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, stair rails, faucet handles, toilet handles, playground equipment, drinking fountains, light switches, desks, tables, chairs, kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, carts and trays) with EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) Use EPA approved disinfectant effective vs. SARS-CoV-2), and increase frequency of disinfection during high-density times and disinfect all shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) between use. Paper-based materials, such as books and loose-leaf paper, are not considered high-risk for COVID-19 transmission, and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures. ● Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products. To ensure effective cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing building and facilities, it is **recommended** that schools: ● Avoid shared use of soft or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, (e.g., stuffed toys, clays). Other **considerations** include the following for providing effective cleaning and disinfecting practices: ● Emphasize the importance of cleaning surfaces well ● **High-touch surfaces such as doorknobs and handrails are the highest touch items within the school facility should be cleaned/disinfected routinely.** Consider cleaning/disinfecting all high-touch surfaces: o At least once per day o Between classes if time is available o After the school day ● Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning; schedule periodic cleanings

during weekends (or alternate days if students will attend on A/B schedules).

- Determine roles in cleaning the facilities.

- Monitor the process; have an accountability system to determine whether the cleaning/disinfecting schedule is being followed.

- Control entrance and exits to buildings.

- Consider providing touchless entry to buildings where possible.

- Consider designating limited entrance points without prohibiting access for students and staff with disabilities.

- Post and communicate changes to building entrance procedures prior to students returning as much as possible.

- Many application methods are available:

  o Electrostatic sprayer, fogging, wipes, compressed air, airless sprayers

  o Avoid scented products if possible

  o Assure chemicals are used according to label instructions

  o Assure proper ventilation and protective equipment for those applying

  o Consider mirroring and making use of the technology the schools are using for facilities

- **Use of aerosols is discouraged due to the presence of flammable propellants and aerosolized compounds (additional precautions and equipment required).**

- Products should be stored securely away from students and adults – authorized personnel only.

- Cleaning/disinfecting should not be performed with children in the classroom or other spaces..

- Consider having professional janitorial staff perform most processes.

- Provide written instructions and training on proper use of all cleaning supplies and equipment.

- Routinely review district cleaning and disinfecting standard operating procedures to ensure facilities are maintained according to those procedures; will additional custodial staff be required?

- Isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces.

- Create a schedule for effectively cleaning and disinfecting buildings once students return. Note: Use products that are less likely to trigger asthma attacks. - Clean and disinfect all work areas, counters, restrooms, doorknobs, and stair railings several times daily. - Create a plan to increase frequency during flu season and if there are increased incidents of COVID-19 exposure in the area or in the school community.	**Refer to Considerations in Plan A as well.** - Wear face masks and disposable gloves during custodial job duties. Carefully remove and discard gloves after use, and immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitizer. - Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces (such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, faucets) throughout the day. Follow the directions on the cleaning product's label. - Conduct routine laundering of work clothes/uniforms. - Proper hand hygiene is an important infection control measure. Wash your hands regularly with soap and

- Ensure there are enough accessible sinks and hand-sanitizing stations to accommodate frequent handwashing by entire classes.

- Determine if the PSU has the appropriate number and type (no-touch) of trash receptacles and that they are placed appropriately to minimize exposure.

- Determine if there is a need for other protective devices for employees with repeated exposure to the public such as clear plastic barriers in school building offices.

- Determine if sneeze guards are required in the cafeteria.

- Are there improvements that can be made to air quality to minimize transmission?

- Are there surfaces that are not easily cleaned that should be recovered or replaced to minimize infection?

- Evaluate how hygiene products like soap, paper towels, tissues and toilet paper are dispensed (no-touch), how frequently they are replenished and where they are stored.

water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

- Key times to clean hands in general include:

  ○ Before, during and after preparing food

  ○ Before eating food

  ○ After using the toilet

  ○ After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing

- Additional times to clean hands on the job include:

  ○ Before and after work shifts

  ○ Before and after work breaks

  ○ After completing custodial tasks and removing gloves

  ○ After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Social Distancing	To ensure effective social distancing, it is **required** that schools: - Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas. - Mark 6 feet of spacing to remind students and staff to always stay 6 feet apart in lines and at other times when they may congregate. - Provide marks on the floors of restrooms and locker rooms to indicate proper social distancing. - Limit nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations. - Have staff monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from a vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa. - Discontinue the use of any self-service food or beverage distribution in the cafeteria (e.g. meals and/or snacks served at school should be individually packaged and served directly to students; milk or juice may be available separately and should also be served directly to students). - Ensure the safety of students with food allergies. To ensure effective social distancing, it is **recommended** that schools: - Minimize opportunities for sustained exposure (15 minutes or more) by ensuring sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet apart between people whenever possible.

- Provide frequent reminders for students and staff to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another when feasible.

- Place physical barriers such as plexiglass for protection at reception desks and similar areas.

- Arrange desks or seating so that students are separated from one another by 6 when feasible. If it is not possible to arrange seating 6 feet apart, consider having all students sit facing the same direction (i.e., all sitting on the same side of a table), or using barriers between students.

- Designate entrance and exit doors for classrooms and restrooms to reduce the chance that people meet face to face.

- Keep students and teachers in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible during the day, and from day to day. Limit mixing between cohort groups as much as possible (e.g., during recess, lunch in the cafeteria, arrival and dismissal, etc.)

- Follow the recommendations outlined in Interim Guidance for administrators and Participants of Youth, College & Amateur Sports Programs (https://www.charlotteobserver.com/latest-news/article242947831.ece/BINARY/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Youth-College-Amateur-Sports-Phase-2.pdf.

- Discontinue activities that involve bringing together large groups of people or activities that do not allow for social distancing, including assemblies, in-person field trips, large groups using playground equipment simultaneously, etc.

- Incorporate virtual events such as field trips, parents/family meetings, assemblies, and performances where possible.

Other **considerations** include the following for providing effective social distancing strategies and practices:

- See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html

- Allowing flexible worksites (such as telework), when necessary.

- Allowing flexible work hours (such as staggered shifts).

- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (such as postponing non-essential meetings or events).

- Downsizing operations.

- Delivering services remotely (e.g., phone, video, or web).

- Limit bringing in students from other schools for special programs (e.g., music, robotics, academic clubs).

- Consider consultation with your local health department.

- In cases where physical distancing will not be possible, LEAs will want to consider implementing other mitigation strategies, such as cloth face masks, hand washing and sanitization.

- Adequate space in hallways. - Ensure room size is considered (classrooms are large enough or class sizes are small enough). - Provide spacing when students and staff are in large outdoor spaces. - Adults should maintain appropriate distance if several are present in a	To ensure effective social distancing, it is **<u>required</u>** that schools: - Ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people at all times in school facilities and on school transportation vehicles. - Limit density of people in school facilities and transportation vehicles to no greater than 50% maximum occupancy to ensure social distancing of at

	setting for any purpose	least 6 feet apart between people.
	• Consider social distancing to the maximum extent possible at meal and materials distributions	• Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas.
	• Provide reminders about personal hygiene etiquette such as washing your hands often, covering your mouth when sneezing or coughing, staying at home if you are not feeling well, etc.	• Mark 6 feet of spacing to remind students and staff to always stay 6 feet apart in lines and at other times when they may congregate.
		• Provide marks on the floors of restrooms and locker rooms to indicate proper social distancing.
	• Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the level of close contact at distribution sites	• Limit nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations.
		• Have staff monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from a vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa.
		• Discontinue the use of any self-service food or beverage distribution in the cafeteria (e.g. meals and/or snacks served at school should be individually packaged and served directly to students; milk or juice may be available separately and should also be served directly to students).
		• Ensure the safety of students with food allergies.
Safety Drills	Considerations Safety drills should be performed in conjunction with social distancing to mitigate the spread of infectious diseases within reason. Consider the following: • Drills should test the capacity of all involved in emergency response, highlighting building-level cooperation between schools, police and first responders. • Drills should be treated as real emergencies, with full and serious participation from all participants, including administrators, teachers, students and first responders. • Drills should be practiced frequently, in a realistic manner, such as during lunch, recess or when the school principal is away from the building. Drills shouldn't be scheduled based on when it is most convenient or least disruptive. • Debriefings should be held after every drill to further enhance response skills. Debriefings can be held with teachers and students in classrooms or in all-staff and faculty meetings. • Drills should be thoroughly evaluated and input should be collected from various drill participants. Mistakes or inconsistencies during drills are learning opportunities and can help improve future response. Many safety experts say the most important part of any drill is the discussion and updated action plan that follows. • Drills should have associated communication plans that include long-term follow-up to support sustainability and progression. Plans should cover all drill types, identify specific objectives and goals for each drill, include logistics and available resources and ensure compliance with state and/or district regulations.	

Use of School Building or Facilities	PSUs are **required** to limit non-essential visitors and activities involving external groups and organizations.
	• See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html
	• District/School Considerations:
	○ PSUs are strongly encouraged to cease all activities involving outside groups/organizations until an evaluation is made to adjust.
	When school buildings are closed; districts should require only essential staff to report in-person to carry out functions that are absolutely necessary. District/School Considerations:
	• District/school leaders should leverage virtual tools and platforms wherever possible to conduct essential business and keep in-person reporting to an absolute minimum during school closures
	• Consider adapting local policies to limit or halt the use of facilities for non-education related activities (ie renting of facilities after hours and on the weekends) in order to reduce the possible spread of COVID-19 and to allow opportunities for thorough cleaning of the facilities during the evening and weekends.
	• Review all Facilities Use Agreements to determine if and how they continue.
Visitors	To ensure visitor protections from the COVID-19 disease, it is **<u>required</u>** that schools:
	• Limit nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations.
	Establish a protocol for visitors: calling the front office before entering, screening visitors, requesting use of face coverings/masks, etc. Restrict nonessential visitors and volunteers.

OPERATIONS: School Nutrition

GUIDANCE FOCUS: School Nutrition

Over 60% of students in NC's public schools are economically disadvantaged. For these students, nutritious meals at school are not simply conveniences, they are critical safety nets to support physical, mental, social, and emotional health and well-being. All students should have access to school meals and adequate time to consume them. District and school officials are encouraged to collaborate with the school nutrition director and staff to determine which meal options best meet the nutritional needs of students in an environment that promotes optimal social distancing and personal hygiene practices as a means of supporting optimal academic success.

To prepare for the reopening of schools, it is suggested the school nutrition director form an advisory committee to discuss possible reopening scenarios that support the various instructional strategies that will be implemented within the district or school. The advisory team could consider discussions around the **School Nutrition Thought Starters** to develop strategies for opening and transitioning through potential plans during the 2020-21 school year. The advisory advisory team should communicate continuously with district/school officials about the feasibility of various meal service options including best practices and the challenges associated with each type of meal service. School nutrition programs must comply with existing federal regulations, policies, and/or approved waivers issued by the USDA at the time of plan implementation.

SCHOOL NUTRITION	PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
Meal Service Options	• Comply with NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) requirements for social distancing and minimizing exposure. • *Gradually* transition from recommendations in Plan B to cafeteria-style meal service based on requirements (at the time) for social distancing and other personal hygiene practices. • Offer various meal service options as needed to promote social distancing, including satellite kiosks, food carts, grab-and-go meals, classroom meals, etc. to provide meals to as many students as possible. • Allow adequate time for students to wash and sanitize hands before and	• Comply with NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) requirements for social distancing and minimizing exposure. • Consider boxed or bagged meals for students upon initial reopening of school to allow students time and experiences needed to adjust to social distancing and personal hygiene practices at school. • Allow students to pre-order meals and a la carte items at least one day in advance to support students' food choices and avoid food waste. • Allow adequate time for students to wash and sanitize hands before and after meals. • Offer meals meals in the cafeteria based on social distancing measures which may include:	• Operationalize the Summer Nutrition Programs with federal waivers to allow non-congregate meal service; meals available for all at no cost. • Prepare meals in schools and make available for pick-up (grab-and-go or curbside) by parents/students. • Deliver meals to students by yellow school buses or other vehicles available to the district/school. • Use yellow school buses as nutrition hubs within the community (parked in areas convenient for homeless families, low income housing communities or other areas, as needed). • Operationalize

after meals.

- Extend and/or stagger meal times to promote social distancing, while ensuring adequate time for students to consume their meals.

○ Clearly marked spacing on floors to promote social distancing in: hallways leading to dining rooms; in serving lines, and in lines to exit the dining room

○ Spaced seating (using outside seating where possible)

○ Use of disposable trays, plates and utensils

○ No self-service or sharing of food or other items

○ Longer meal periods to allow for delayed meal service due to social distancing

○ Cleaning/disinfecting of tables/chairs or other contact surfaces before, during (as needed) and after meal service.

- Prepare boxed/bagged meals as alternatives (as needed for unique situations) and for home-bound students as needed or required in the IEP or 504 Plan.

- Continuously monitor meal service options to determine where modifications may be needed to support student/staff acceptance, student/staff well-being and promote meal participation.

community organizations to serve as Summer Nutrition Program sponsors to support additional meal service sites for food-insecure children/students.

- Schools designated as meal preparation/ distribution sites in economically distressed communities (or other areas as needed to support meals to food-insecure vulnerable children and students).

Considerations for Operationalizing

- Plan multiple menus to accommodate meals in the classroom, meals served in hallways, meals-to-go (when operating Plan A and Plan B attendance models) or other academic models.

- Place food and supply orders as quickly as possible to ensure an adequate supply of products that meet the district's/school's meal service options.

- Encourage the district to provide bottled water to students since water fountain use may be limited.

- Develop written materials for families to help them understand new meal service models and to combat misinformation as required in the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12).

Considerations for Operationalizing

- For efficiency, consider shelf-stable, individually wrapped or frozen meals delivered to students for multiple days (prior approval from the local health department required).

Meal Counting and Claiming	• Implement a system of meal counting and claiming that is consistent with federal regulations at the Point of Service based on the type of meal service provided; touchless Point of Service options are recommended (scanned, verbal, etc.). • Modify student meal charge policies as needed to reflect current practices.	• Implement a system of meal counting and claiming at the Point of Service based on the type of meal service provided (grab-and-go, curbside pick up, delivery by yellow school buses or other vehicles).

Staffing	• Comply with NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) for
	
	   ○ Social distancing and minimizing exposure
	
	   ○ Continuously monitor staff safety and well-being
	
	   ○ Handling suspected, presumptive or confirmed positive cases of COVID 19.
	
	• Provide continuous training for staff in social distancing, proper hygiene, proper use of PPE and other practices to protect students, staff and others.
	
	• Determine staffing needs based on specific criteria including but not limited to location, start/end times, duties and back-up/substitutes.
	
	• Modify HR policies/procedures to reflect actual practices when work requirements change to reflect new work plans/approaches.
		• Determine staffing needs based on specific criteria, including but not limited to location, start/end times, duties and back-up/substitutes.

Cleaning and Disinfecting	• Follow NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) for cleaning and hygiene. • Conduct routine cleaning and disinfecting of dining rooms, including tables, chairs and other high-touch surfaces between and/or throughout meal service; follow DPI-approved HACCP procedures https://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/information-resources/haccp-food-safety • Provide adequate waste receptacles (size and number) to allow for easy discard of disposable trays, food containers, utensils and other items. • Increase frequency of waste disposal and recycling, as needed, to support the use of disposable products. • Ensure all practices are consistent with Food Code, HACCP, OSHA, and other regulatory authorities.	• Conduct routine cleaning and disinfecting of kitchen, dining rooms and other high-touch surfaces during meal preparation, distribution and delivery.

OPERATIONS: Transportation

Student Transportation supports student access to the educational environment at school. Without it, many students will be unable to attend school. However, as we've seen this spring, in an emergency, school transportation can also adapt to provide other logistical support to students including internet access, nutritional support and materials distribution and collection.

As a logistical operation, the primary issues determining a course forward are the constraints placed upon PSU transportation departments such as: ride times, school start and dismissal times, the age range of the students transported together, funding available, and now, potentially, social distancing and cleaning requirements. PSUs must make different considerations depending on the situation in their district.

Considerations to include:

- Volume of ridership
- Modification(s) of vehicle
- Preparing buses (disinfectants/signage/social measures/student accomodations)
- Reserve/substitute driver roster
- Pre-board screening
- Air-flow

TRANSPORTATION		
PLAN A	**PLAN B**	**PLAN C**
NCDHHS Requirements Clean and disinfect transportation vehicles regularly. Children must not be present when a vehicle is being cleaned Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children and adequate ventilation when staff use such products Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle (e g , surfaces in the driver's cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles) prior to morning routes and prior to afternoon routes Keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out Clean, sanitize, and disinfect equipment including items such as car seats and seat belts, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools	**NCDHHS Requirements** **Adhere to all requirements outlined in Plan A and:** Ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people at all times in school facilities and on school transportation vehicles. Limit density of people in school facilities and transportation vehicles to no greater than 50% maximum occupancy to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet apart between people.	**NCDHHS Requirements** Follow all social distancing requirements for anyone entering the building.

Follow the symptom screening protocol outlined in the Monitoring for Symptoms section for any person entering a school transportation vehicle, which could be using the option of a parent/guardian attestation Individuals must stay home and not board transportation if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone positive for COVID-19

Note: Upon arrival at school, students do not need to be rescreened if screening was followed prior to entry into the vehicle However, as noted above, if a parent/guardian provided an attestation only, students do need to be screened upon arrival at school

Create a plan for getting students home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle

Enforce that if an individual becomes sick during the day, they must not use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above

If a driver becomes sick during the day, they must follow protocols outlined above and must not return to drive students

Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) to support healthy hygiene behaviors on all school transportation vehicles for safe use by staff and older children

- ○ Hand sanitizer should only remain on school transportation while the vehicles are in use

- ○ Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers

TRANSPORTATION	PLAN A Considerations	PLAN B Considerations	PLAN C Considerations
Initial Information and First Steps	• Survey parents to project student attendance in each Plan; identify the probable student attendees, their scheduled attendance days, if not every day, **and transportation needs**, **at least one month before the start of school**; Finalize two weeks prior to the start of school. Encourage walking, biking, and carpooling when appropriate. Consider allowing students from the same household to be seated together on the school bus Create a pathway for parents who need student transportation to find carpool options in lieu of school bus transportation	**N/A Remote Learning Only**	

	Consider student transportation flexibility restrictions
	
	  ○ Consider enforcing no-transport zones to the legislated maximum of 1.5 miles
	
	  ○ Consider limiting all planned alternate stop locations that which lead to different AM and PM bus assignments
	
	  ○ Strongly consider not allowing students to alter bus assignments temporarily (such as allowing riding home with a friend)		

Health Pre-Screening of Students Before Boarding a School Bus	• Comply with requirements established by the NCDHHS NCDHHS StrongSchools NC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) for monitoring students for symptoms and attestation materials. • Consult with the local board attorney to advise on the refusal of boarding and maintenance of confidentiality of the student/parents in this process. **Considerations for Operationalizing** • Adopt a policy on what will be done if a child does not provide the attestation and/or pass the screening process; the policy may vary by age. • Consider an additional adult (attendant) to screen/monitor students as recommended by NCDHHS. Investigate if volunteers may be used to assist. • Choreograph procedures with written instructions for drivers, attendants, parents, and students. Include a seating chart in these plans for tracking and to support contact tracing, if necessary. The longer students are outside of the bus, the greater the risk from other motorists. • Add extra time to the route to accommodate. • Provide enhanced PPE for the person screening / accepting attestations.	• Only pre-screened staff should be allowed on board	

TRANSPORTATION	PLAN A Considerations	PLAN B Considerations	PLAN C Considerations

Staffing	**Assess Operational Continuity Risk** • Identify drivers, attendants, and substitute drivers who are considered high-risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 as described in Protecting Vulnerable Populations per NCDHHS StrongSchools NC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) guidance. • Identify all staff that have school bus driver certificates (including teachers) which could be deployed to drive buses in the event a large portion of drivers become unavailable simultaneously. • **NCDHHS Requirement:** Monitor staff for symptoms as required by the NCDHHS NCDHHS StrongSchools NC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) • Consult the local Human Resources Department for guidance regarding the **ability to require staff with school bus driver certifications to drive,** if necessary. • Expect that the quantity of school buses and school bus drivers is likely limited to prior year levels; expansion will be difficult. • Behind the wheel training will likely present a logistical bottleneck to acquiring certified school bus drivers due to social distancing requirements	• Use buses for emergency purposes such as transporting meals or distributing school resources or making wifi available to students in various communities.
School Bus Modification	• By SBE policy TRAN-005 any modification to school buses or addition of equipment must be approved by DPI o Plexiglass installation likely would violate Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and introduce a significant risk of injury or death in a collision. • Use only modifications approved by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and DPI	• Seats may be removed to accommodate nutrition distribution purposes if desired
Preparing Buses	• Post appropriate signage: CDC Signs Link (may not cover existing required signage and safety instructions). • Mark seating areas to indicate where students should sit if attempting to social distance to any degree.	• Install available WiFi Equipment • Post any required school nutrition signage • Consider posting appropriate signage: CDC Signs Link • Do not cover any existing required signage and safety instructions
TRANSPORTATION	**PLAN A Considerations**	**PLAN B Considerations**	**PLAN C Considerations**

School Bus Cleaning/ Disinfecting and Hygiene Requirements	**NCDHHS Requirement:** Comply with required cleaning and hygiene guidance established by the NCDHHS NCDHHS StrongSchools NC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12)
	
	   ○ Avoid scented products.
	
	   ○ Use of aerosols is discouraged due to increased risk to staff and students. A school bus may not operate with any aerosol or unlabeled liquid container on board.
	
	Considerations
	
	   • Determine a method for issuing personal quantities of hand sanitizer to staff or staff and students to comply with NCDHHS requirements.
	
	   • It is not recommended that school bus drivers be responsible for dispensing any chemicals to children or for monitoring proper use.
	
	   • Consider having professional janitorial staff perform most cleaning/disinfecting processes.
	
	   • If transportation staff must perform cleaning/disinfecting processes, provide written instructions as well as training on proper use of all chemicals and equipment.

Driver and Attendant Training and Protection Considerations	**Considerations**
	
	● Driver/Attendant Training on newly developed practices and policies:
	  ○ New policies related to transportation due to COVID-19 response
	  ○ Enforcement of health and safety rules due to COVID-19
	  ○ Leave policies and required actions upon contact with a person who tests positive for COVID-19
	● Clear written instructions on, at minimum:
	  ○ Daily Self-Screening or District Health Screening
	  ○ Expected personal hygiene practices
	  ○ Additional duties such as cleaning
	● Consider providing school bus drivers with personal quantities of hand sanitizer.
	  ○ Should not be stored in the vehicle except while in use.
	  ○ Should not dispense chemicals to children
	● Cloth Face Coverings or Medical-Grade Protection (in certain circumstances)
	  ○ Must not impact or restrict the driver's movement or impair the driver's vision in any way
	  ○ Should be encouraged where medically appropriate for the driver
	  ○ Consider requiring, where medically appropriate, when loading and unloading
	● Face Shields
	  ○ Must not impact or restrict the driver's movement or impair the driver's vision in any way
	  ○ Should not be worn while driving
	  ○ Consider requiring when loading and unloading
	● Gloves
	  ○ Not recommended for general use by NCDHHS and CDC
	  ○ May be needed for disinfecting and other special situations such as body fluid cleanup
	  ○ May be needed if performing screening
	  ○ Provide training specific to glove use, removal, and hygiene

EC Student Additional Considerations	**Considerations** ● Consult the EC Department early in the planning process. in the planning process. ● Make decisions based on each students' unique needs. ● Consider issues with contract transportation of multiple children to ensure safety. ○ Define clear rules for any contractor

	○ Consider increased use of parent contracts
	
	● If close-contact is necessary
	
	   ○ Consider enhanced PPE needed and requirements for use to protect staff and students
	
	      ▪ Enhanced PPE may be needed for needed for staff or staff and students depending on the nature of the disability
	
	● Consult with district nurses about any procedural changes for students with specific medical needs
	
	● Consider mirroring how the school intends to handle each student	

Education of Parents and Students	**Considerations** ● Inform parents of all new policies regarding student transportation. ● Provide training materials on school district processes for proper loading and unloading in the morning and afternoon. ● Provide school bus social distancing training to students. ● Advise parents and students on proper bus stop etiquette. ○ Include social distancing guidance for the bus stop	● Provide procedures, requirements, and locations for use of WiFi. ● Provide procedures and requirements for receipt of nutrition services or instructional materials.

Other Considerations to Support Social Distancing on School Buses	**Considerations**
	
	● Load students from back to front when possible and not outweighed by other considerations such as age.
	
	● Unload students from front to back.
	
	● Consider multiple bus runs to the same school.
	
	   ○ Consider wider arrival and departure times
	
	   ○ Support these efforts with earlier screening and longer in-classroom supervision
	
	● Provide bus tags for children to support safe and efficient departure boarding in the afternoon.
		● Adults should maintain appropriate distance if multiple are present on the bus for any purpose.
		
		● Use social distancing to to the maximum extent possible at meal and materials distributions.
		
		● Wear appropriate PPE for the level of close contact at distribution sites.

COMMUNICATION

One of the fastest ways to win (or lose) the trust of stakeholders is measured by the effectiveness of the district's or school's communications system. Developing and sharing a clear process helps district and school leaders thoughtfully and proactively design systems and processes that can be deployed easily when needed.

When considering the impact of communications efforts it is important to remember that communication is only deemed effective when information is delivered, received, and as a result, understood by all stakeholders.

Here are a few important factors to consider in the development of comprehensive and effective communications strategy.

Identify Stakeholders
Consulting a wide variety of stakeholders is critical for the development and effective communication of quality Remote Instruction Plans. An important first step towards meaningful engagement is to identify your stakeholder groups. Do stakeholder groups ensure every voice represented? If yes, great! If not, this is a great opportunity to expand your engagement efforts.

Examine Engagement Structures
Once you know you have identified all of the right groups, the next step is ensuring mechanisms are in place to *share and receive information*. Critically review the systems and structures in place to interact with these various stakeholder groups. For example, do you have an active district-level advisory board? School-based PTA/PTOs? Teacher and student advisory councils? Community councils? Grandparents/retirees? How would these groups typically share and receive information from your district/school? Do they understand these systems? Are the details of how and when these groups convene readily available? If you wanted to enlist feedback from all parents in your district/school, what survey tool would you use? How would you distribute this information?

Review Internal Communication Processes & Activate Ambassadors
It is important to remember that every employee in your district/school is an ambassador. All should be empowered to respond to questions, correct misinformation and direct people to resources. In order to be good ambassadors, they must have access to pertinent information. Effective internal communication is the foundation of healthy organizations. If it is important for stakeholders to know and understand, it is important for all staff to know and understand it FIRST. It is imperative that all staff understand the Remote Instruction Plan specifics and the tools to be used to communicate these plans. What systems of internal communication does your system currently employ? Email is a great starting point; however, it must be a communicated expectation that staff read information from the district/school. It is also important to communicate with staff that they are ambassadors and the importance of this role in building public trust.

Identify Key Communicators
Key communicators are those external stakeholders who have access to accurate information about what is happening in your district/schools. These individuals are often trusted sources of information who have access to broad audiences. Key communicators should be recruited as such and made fully aware of important information.

Communicate HOW You Communicate
Seek input from your advisors about the communications strategies they prefer. What do existing metrics about your engagement efforts tell you about where people are most likely to go for information (ex: website, social media, all-call system, text, etc.). It is absolutely critical that you routinely communicate your communications plan. Helping your stakeholders know how, when and where to find information

reduces frustration and builds confidence. Maintain their confidence by keeping content fresh and updated. Develop a process and identify specific individuals responsible for reviewing and updating website and social media content. Reviewing content and providing feedback is a great task for a trusted key communicator. Consult with your district Public Information Officer or Communications Coordinator to explore other avenues to communicate to your stakeholder groups.

Seek & Apply Feedback

This will help to continue what works and tweak or abandon what did not. When seeking feedback, keep it simple. You may find it useful to use the same questions with each stakeholder group for easy cross-reference. Focus groups, in person or virtual, are also good strategies to gather feedback. As a rule, it is always helpful to define how feedback will be used to avoid unnecessary conflict. If you are seeking feedback in an advisory capacity rather than for a democratic process, state that. Once you have gathered feedback, it is important to acknowledge what was received and what, if any action will result.

COMMUNICATING & COMBATING MISINFORMATION

Help ensure the information that staff, students and their families receive is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the **CDC** and **NC DHHS** to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C

NCDHHS Requirements

Disseminate COVID-19 information and combat misinformation through multiple channels to staff, students and families. Ensure that families are able to access communication channels to appropriate staff at the school with questions and concerns.

- Some reliable sources include: NC DHHS COVID-19 Webpage, Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash, NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates, NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources, and the additional resources listed at the end of this guidance document.

NCDHHS Requirement

Put up signs, posters, and flyers at main entrances and in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities such as those found on the Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19 to remind students and staff to wear face coverings, wash hands, and stay 6 feet apart whenever possible (Wear, Wait, Wash).

Know Your W's signs are available in English and Spanish.

Teach students who cannot yet read what the signs' language and symbols mean.

Considerations for Operationalizing

Regardless of which Reopening Plan (A-B-C) schools are operating within, the following tools and strategies will help build understanding:

Websites

Districts and schools should consider a designated place on their site's homepage for all COVID-19 information, school operations information, and other critical information. Maintain up-to-date content to build confidence in this resource.

Social Media

Use components from the Public Health and Social Media Toolkit to create a comprehensive district or school-wide social media campaign. Focus on one key component a day or for multiple days. A relevant photograph or video serve as a great hook for social media posts. Update content frequently to build confidence in this resource.

Video

(Plans A-B) Quick videos (3 minutes or less) are a good way to illustrate procedures students and staff will be required to follow as they enter buses or school buildings. Videos are a great way to engage and educate students, parents and stakeholders.

Testimonials from students and staff about their experiences give external stakeholders a glance behind the school walls. These videos can be powerful tools to build confidence in districts and schools.

Phone Alert/Text Systems

Many districts and schools have access to a phone alert/text system. This is often the quickest and most effective way to connect with students, families and staff. Ensure parents know how to update their contact information to make sure they do not miss important messages. Develop an expectation as to when this system is used and communicate when parents can expect to receive "routine" information (for example, a Sunday afternoon call). Limit the use of these systems outside of the communicated "routine use" to matters of utmost importance. This will help ensure families actually listen to the calls or read the text alerts. Monitor metrics to see what the connectivity rates are and set incremental goals to improve that connectivity.

Remember... communicate HOW you will communicate with families during this important time and take into consideration how different audiences and families communication needs vary.

STUDENT LEARNING

STUDENT LEARNING: Instructional Planning

As public health needs change, it is important for all public schools to be prepared for student learning for each of the required plans. In preparing for School Year 2020-2021, PSUs will need to consider support for students and teachers based on the Student Learning Instructional Plan being implemented. The charts below outlines considerations for the following plans:

Plan A: Minimal Social Distancing

Plan B: Moderate Social Distancing

Plan C: Remote Learning, *only*

PLAN A: MINIMAL SOCIAL DISTANCING

The focus in Plan A is to prepare for moving to Plan B or Plan C while traditional instruction is occurring.

PLAN A	Description	Considerations
Traditional Instruction with Preparation for Blended Learning, Online Learning, and Offline Options	Students on campus with traditional instruction adapted to prepare for transition from traditional learning to remote learning.	• Consider weekly checklists with clear instructions that can be followed on-or off-site. • Create standards-aligned lessons that work toward mastery of the learning targets for instruction in a traditional classroom, adhering to health and safety recommendations. • Design the lessons with the possibility of shifting to Blended Learning, online learning and offline remote learning. • Identify assessment tools to determine student learning readiness. • Explore and determine appropriate extended learning strategies that are effective for local usage. • Conduct curriculum mapping to infuse critical standards not addressed or mastered from the previous year. • Provide practice on-site for potential platforms and resources students will use when they are off-site. • Include how to submit work, where to view teacher feedback and guidance and practice with downloading materials to be available in an offline format. • Model technical troubleshooting skills during on-site instruction. • Assess the professional learning needs of your teachers and staff regarding the effective use of the remote instruction and the PSU resources that will be used. • Establish how you will communicate effectively with stakeholders. • Provide resources for students to create evidence of their knowledge in a variety of formats to demonstrate mastery. • Create customized learning pathways, where learning goals and objectives are linked to explicit directions for completion. • Begin professional development of all teachers, students, parents, and community partners in preparation to transition to Plan B and Plan C.

Plan A Benefits and Challenges

Provides opportunities for students, teachers and parents to practice preparation for remote instructions and blended

learning in a face-to-face instruction environment

Provides opportunities for districts to prepare instructional materials

Challenges due to lack of consistency in digital content and instructional materials

Plan B: Implements a Blended Learning Model whereas students transition between on-campus and remote instruction depending on the specific schedule and needs.

Guiding Principles for Blended Learning for All

Blended learning...

- combines classroom learning with online learning, in which students influence the time, pace and place of their learning.

- is accessible by all students for which the learning is intended, using a variety of offline and online strategies;

- is responsive to diverse learning groups;

- addresses the curricular and instructional needs, aligned to standards;

- considers the whole child and home learning environment;

- adapts to the limitations and variances of the local context.

The Blended Learning plan implemented should be the model that is most appropriate for student grade, subject, and based on calendar structure, schedules and unforeseen events. With each plan, consider the following criteria to develop an effective deployment plan:

PLAN B
Instructional Planning
Moderate Social Distancing

Blended Learning for All
When implementing each plan, identify the best BL plan to meet district/school/grade level needs pending calendar structure, traditional and remote learning days.

Station Rotation: Students move on a fixed schedule between face-to-face and online instruction	Flex Rotation: Online instruction is primary and supplemented by support for small groups, tutoring, interventions	Live Distance Instruction: Videostream classrooms that are on-site to students who may be unable to attend physically.	Online Driver: Entire course is online with teacher check-in points	Face-to-Face Driver: Online learning is case by case as a supplement to the curriculum based on readiness	Online Lab: Courses are taught online, typically on campus and supervised by adult

Considerations

Communication:	Review *Remote Instruction Plan Guidance* to ensure targets are being met to provide quality off-site instruction to include regular check-ins with students on a daily/weekly/set intervals.
	Find secure ways to connect virtually with parents, synchronously or asynchronously, to deepen the relationship with students and families.
	Communicate with families in a consistent format and time.
	Help parents develop a flexible learning schedule when at home, and a dedicated space for schoolwork.
	Provide regular check-in or office hours for students.
	Set office hours and information sessions to accommodate for parents' work schedules.
	Help parents with strategies to balance screen time; physical exercise, art and music expression, and social connections.
	Ensure that communication with families takes into account families with disabilities and other potential language barriers (i.e. ELs).
	Increase the efficiency of class time/whole group communicating with live lessons.
Instructional Planning:	Establish clear routines, processes for aligned deployment in each plan (teacher expectations, student expectations, parent support).
	Clearly define and communicate the BL plans with all staff.
	Determine options for training and supporting substitute teachers when regular teachers are ill or unable to support teaching from a remote setting.
	Determine professional development needs for teacher leaders and administrators in regards to coaching, monitoring and supporting teachers with virtual lesson plans, delivery, assessment, and communication with parents.
	Create Professional Development for staff (prior to implementing blended/remote instruction).

You may consider using [Miller's How to Teach Remote](#) or other MOOCs.

Identify programs/resources to manage Blended Learning at each grade level.

Identify instruction delivery method: Weekly checklists, Choice Boards, Playlists, Pathways, Project-based learning, etc.

Consider using Project-Based Learning as an instructional approach that allows students to work both in an online learning system and offline on the project portion of the Project-Based Learning unit.

Create lessons that are pre-recorded and engaging.

Allow for student voice and choice

Refer to and utilize the [Quality Review Tools for Digital Learning Resources](#) for purchased or locally developed digital content.

Consider how to effectively manage computers/devices to ensure each student has an available, operable device at school and at home; provide technical support for maintenance and upkeep of the computer/device if issued from the PSU.

Establish explicit directions for each activity.

Focus on quality over quantity – the purpose is not to create busy work, but rather to ensure that students are working toward mastery of the learning target.

Create varying cognitive activity levels and label each.

Label amount of time for each activity.

All activities should be measurable.

Establish PLC meeting times for planning, creating, PD, data collection, reflection, etc.

Establish virtual vs. face-to-face time limits (be mindful of age and other individual limitations).

Create process and training for lesson delivery, assignment collection, feedback, data collection, and response to instruction.

Plan for teacher supports to provide feedback and support for teachers in a virtual setting.

Determine options for training and supporting substitute teachers when regular teachers are ill or unable to support teaching from a remote setting.

Identify lessons for Core Curriculum vs. Remediation/Enrichment supports.

Identify clear, measurable and aligned learning objectives.

Consider engaging programs and high quality lessons rather than online worksheets (Revised Blooms, DOK, SAMR, etc.).

Differentiate PD based on the fact that some districts, schools, staff are further along than others.

Consider an orientation to focus around building relationships, teaching/learning processes and social-emotional learning activities/support.

Create a process for all teachers to review IEPs and 504s for the students they serve as they plan differentiated lessons to address all learners.

Balance collaborative and independent opportunities for students with teacher led instructions, interactive lessons, flipped classroom modules, project based activities, etc.

Provide balanced opportunities for students to participate in asynchronous and synchronous

	instruction and learning activities. Identify what grade levels/students/courses can be self-paced, module based and/or guided for appropriate supports. Determine modifications needed for teachers with limited connectivity capability.
Parent/Family:	Clearly define and communicate the BL plans with all stakeholders. Communicate BL plans and processes with parents and community to increase support and relationships. Offer support sessions in virtual family nights. Provide initial practice sessions with parents/guardians. Share routines, processes and expectations focused on how to support the student. Teach families how to check internet speed.
Student:	• Clearly define and communicate expectations, with a document that students can reference easily for a reminder of those expectations. • Provide a video overview/tutorial or engaging activity (scavenger hunt) for navigating the online resources and how to submit work. • Determine modifications needed for teachers with limited connectivity capability. • Provide equity through Parallel Instructional Plans for Offline Options for students with limited connectivity. ○ Download options. ○ Allow phone-in access. ○ Print instructional packets. ○ Telephone texting services. ○ Apps to provide messaging, links, pictures, videos, and upload assignments.

Plan B Benefits and Challenges

- Blended learning provides flexibility.
- Blended learning increases the opportunity for personalization and relationship building for students and families.
- Digital tools and online resources need to be reliable, easy to use and up-to-date.
- Not every educator is prepared to transition to Blended Learning due to professional learning needs.
- Not every school/district has enough devices and/or internet access to deploy to all students.

- Preparation timeline to plan and provide PD.

- May need to consider stipends.

- Access to broadband connectivity is limited in many areas.

- Funding provided at this time is limited and non-recurring to keep equipment/devices updated.

- Personalized professional learning for staff that prepares all to be effective in delivering Blended Learning.

- Various staff levels of comfort with technology.

PLAN C: REMOTE LEARNING ONLY

Plan C provides guidance for remote instruction for all learners. Remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or Learning Management Systems (LMS).

PLAN C	Description	Considerations

Remote Instruction Only K-12	All participate in remote instruction only.	• Provide clear communication to students and families to share online learning participation expectations, remote classroom materials access and set protocols to communicate with teachers, to include set office hours and opportunities to collaborate with educators and other students.
		
		• Review *Remote Instruction Plan Guidance* to ensure targets are being met to provide quality off-site instruction to include regular check-ins with students on a daily/weekly/set intervals.
		
		• Establish clear teacher expectations to support remote learning. Consider including daily check-ins with students.
		
		• Will your plan include direct interaction with students, asynchronous engagement, PLCs, and/or preparation?
		
		• Determine modifications needed for teachers with limited connectivity capability.
		
		• Consider following regular school schedules to avoid meeting conflicts for staff and students.
		
		• Develop roles and responsibilities that support students' educational, emotional, health, and safety needs for all instructional staff**.**
		
		• Provide equity through Parallel Instructional Plans for Offline Options for students with limited connectivity.
		
		    ○ Download options.
		
		    ○ Allow phone-in access.
		
		    ○ Print instructional packets.
		
		    ○ Telephone texting services.
		
		    ○ Apps to provide messaging, links, pictures, videos, and upload assignments
		
		• Screen-sharing video programs to provide short video tutorials for parents or students.
		
		• Instructional videos to DVD for at-home viewing.
		
		• Digital files home loaded onto a loaner device or a USB drive.
		
		• All considerations in Plan A and B.

Plan C Benefits and Challenges

- Not every school/district has received Blended Learning PD.

- Not every school/district has enough devices and/or internet access to deploy with fidelity.

- Staff summer timeline and required PD to prepare well in advance.

- District flexible funding priorities may be under-resourced as they balance BL needs with operational needs (devices, programs, etc).

- Broadband space and speed.

- Funding provided at this time is limited and non-recurring to keep equipment/devices updated.

- Avoid one-size fits all PD practices that allow for complacency for those further along in Blended Learning.

- Various staff levels of comfort with technology.

Student Learning Resources Document

STUDENT LEARNING: Determining Student Learning Needs

Overall Considerations:

● Students will have been exposed to a variety of remote learning approaches over the last several months. There may have been very different approaches by teachers within a grade level or team even in the same school.

● Students will have responded very differently within the remote learning environment; ie. some students may have been very engaged and continued participating in all learning activities assigned by the teacher(s), while others may not have been engaged at all throughout the period of extended school closure due to factors beyond their control due to access of devices or home context.

● Students may have different social and/or emotional needs as a result of the extended school closures. These needs may influence their response to instruction and will need to be considered when designing instructional activities and formative assessment practices and tools.

Guiding Questions:

1. How will teachers balance formatively assessing students to identify what they know and are able to do with the need   to provide grade level instruction?

2. How will instruction meet the needs of students who need additional support for the assigned grade-level content standards while also meeting the needs of students who need extended-learning opportunities?

3. What support will there be for teachers (at the classroom level) to develop or select formative assessments that are appropriate and support teacher understanding of the resulting data to determine current student needs?

4. Which teachers will participate in the NCDPI's Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction division's summer training on formative assessment? Will there be other supports for formative assessment? How will those attending share with others?

5. How will a locally-developed curriculum map be adapted for Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C?

6. What resources and tools are available/accessible to determine a student's learning needs? From classroom level, school and district?

7. How will users (teachers, principals and district leaders) of any formative data clearly know the purpose and appropriate uses of such data?

8. How will instructional priorities be communicated to parents, and how will formative data be shared and communicated with parents?

Determining Student Learning Needs

Use various strategies throughout the beginning of the year and throughout the school year to see where students may have strengths/weaknesses and may need extra support or scaffolding to learn current grade-level content or may need additional opportunities to extend learning. Resources could include Schoolnet, Back to School Resources, locally provided student-level tools, and other formative assessment strategies.

It is important to recognize the limitations of any individual tool for any determination. Some tools may not be diagnostic, may not fully measure all of the content standards, may only measure the assessed content standards, and may not be available for all grade levels and content areas.

Determine student learning needs through a variety of ways and throughout the academic year to best support growth and achievement.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
This scenario allows a traditional back-to-school review during the initial return to school. All students are present at the same time to engage in formative assessment and learning activities. Likewise, throughout the school year, instruction occurs on the same trajectory as is typical.	This scenario extends the window of time needed for back-to-school formative assessment and learning activities. With not all students present at school at the same time, access to these tools at home may reduce the amount of time required overall. Throughout the school year, the instructional timeline may need to be revised based on students' instructional time on-site and off-site.	This scenario requires tools that are accessible at home. SchoolNet, Passport for Learning and the Math Sets will be available at home, but there will need to be available technical support. Remote access to these tools is dependent on the students having access to the internet and a compatible device. This becomes a critical factor if instruction is remote for all students throughout the school year.

Resources

Schoolnet - Instructional Improvement System as part of the Home Base suite of applications, provides ways to assess student learning in the classroom or at home. More than 100,000 North Carolina standards-aligned assessment items are available for educators to build assessments. Rich data analytics with pre-formatted reports can be generated for the teacher to personalize instruction and identify skill gaps. Schoolnet online assessments provide accommodations for students who need read-aloud and extended-time supports as well as color contrast and line reader masking.

- Schoolnet NCDPI Google Site
- Schoolnet Webinar Archive
- Schoolnet Self-Paced Course for Educators
- Schoolnet in a Blended Learning Classroom

Back to School Resources - Ready-made tools (reading and mathematics in grades 4-8, NC Math 1, and NC Math 2) that teachers can use to obtain formative data to help guide classroom instruction.These resources align to part of the NC Standard Course of Study and were not developed to be diagnostic but are intended to be used to inform instruction needs.

Formative Assessment Professional Development provided by the Standards, Curriculum and Instruction Division in Summer 2020.

STUDENT LEARNING: Other: Athletics, Before and After-School Programming, and Extracurricular Activities

Athletics

High School:

On June 8, 2020, NC High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) released updated guidance. NCHSAA utilizes a phased approach for high school athletes and is intended to help school administrators, coaches, parents, students and communities operationalize a gradual reopening of high school athletic activities. Please note that only the first phase has been determined by the NCHSAA; they will update when public health needs are clear.

See below for links to NCHSAA information.

- Cover Memo NCHSAA Reopening Sports/Activities: Summer Guidance
- NCHSAA Reopening Sports/Activities: Summer Guidance
- Initial Screening Questions
- NCHSAA COVID-19 Athlete/Coach Staff Daily Monitoring Form

Middle School:

NCDPI strongly recommends that PSUs follow the NCHSAA guidance for Middle School Athletics as well.

Before and After School Programming

In order to support families, it is important to maintain before- and after-school programs, as much as possible. These programs not only provide a service for working families to have students in safe locations, they also provide enriching opportunities for students to grow and develop. Before- and after-School programming will follow the same NCDHHS guidance as the regular school day. All requirements and recommendations will still apply.

While moving between Reopening Plans, consider how before- and after-School Programming may continue effectively, especially during Plan A and Plan B. Work to respond to student and family needs during this particularly challenging year.

Extracurricular Activities

In order to support the whole child and develop a student's passions and interests, it is important to consider maintaining extracurricular activities during the various reopening plans, as much as possible. Activities and events will follow the same NCDHHS guidance as the regular school day. All requirements and recommendations will still apply.

While moving though the Reopening Plans, consider how extracurricular activities may continue effectively, especially during Plan B and Plan C. Some clubs and programs may move virtually. Work to respond to student needs for access and availability of resources to participate in activities.

RESOURCES

North Carolina COVID-19

Considerations for Schools

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

Reopening Guidance

Coping with Stress

Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2

Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Work Groups	NCDPI Work Group Leads	Work Group Membership
Core Leadership	**Bev Emory** *Deputy Superintendent* **David Stegall** *Deputy Superintendent*	Angel Goodwine Batts Eliz Colbert Ellen Essick Tara Galloway Jeremy Gibbs Chloe Gossage Mary Hemphill Lynn Harvey Matt Hoskins Tammy Howard Angie Mullennix Sneha Shah-Coltrane Jessica Swencki Tom Tomberlin Deanna Townsend-Smith Robert "Bo" Trumbo Graham Wilson Vanessa Wrenn

Remediation Support and Summer Jumpstart	Tara Galloway	Bridget Bilbro
		Joy Cantey, *Literacy Director, Guilford County*
	Mary Hemphill	Ginger Cash
		Kristi Day
		Elaine Darby
		Beth Folger, *Deputy Superintendent, Onslow County*
		Angel Goodwine Batts
		Brian Kingsley, *Chief Academic Officer, Charlotte-Mecklenburg*
		Dave Machado
		Sherri Miller, *Principal, Wake County*
		Alessandro Montanari
		Lory Morrow, *Superintendent, Lincoln County*
		Donna Murray
		Gordon Palmer, *Principal, Alexander County*
		Tonia Parrish
		Mary Phillips
		Dante Poole, *Principal, Moore County*
		Denise Schulz
		Jenni Wilkinson
		Chris Triolo
Instructional Planning & Scheduling	Tammy Howard	**CORE TEAM**
		Ashley Baquero
	Angie Mullennix	Matthew Cheeseman, *Superintendent, Beaufort County*
		Paula Crawford
	Sneha Shah-Coltrane	James Frye, *Principal, Catawba County*
		DeShawna Gooch
	Vanessa Wrenn	Cynthia Martin
		Rachel McBroom
		Jeff McDaris, *Superintendent, Transylvania County*
		Trey Michael
		Patrick Miller, *Superintendent, Greene County*
		Melany Paden
		Amy Rhyne
		Todd Silberman
		Andrew Smith, *Chief Strategy Officer, Rowan-Salisbury*
		Kristi Day, *Section Chief, ELA and Languages*
		Beverly Vance, *Section Chief, Math and Science*
		Jill Barker, *Assistant Superintendent, Haywood County*
		Akisha Osei Sarfo, *Chief Performance Officer, Guilford*

		County Schools Maxey Moore, *Section Chief, Test Development* Shannon Jordan, *Section Chief, Testing Policy and Operations*
		INPUT/TASKS TEAM Beth Cross Stephanie Cyrus Rob Dietrich Burt Jenkins Bennett Jones, *Principal, Johnston County* Nate Kolk-Tomberlin, *High School Junior Advisor, SBE* Mariah Morris, *Teacher, Moore County* Dreama McCoy Jennifer Nobles Latanya Pattillo, *Teacher Advisory to the Governor, Governor's Office* NCDPI Standards, Curriculum & Instruction Team NCDPI Advanced Learning & Gifted Education Team NCDPI Accountability Services Team NCDPI Digital Teaching & Learning Team

Operations (School Nutrition, Transportation & Facilities)	**Lynn Harvey** **Robert "Bo" Trumbo**	Erika Berry Tiffany Byrd, *Teacher of the Year, Durham Public Schools* Jeff Booker, *Superintendent, Gaston County* Stephanie Dischiavi James Ellerbe Kevin Harrison Jennifer Hefner, *Superintendent, Alexander County* Janet Johnson David Lipton, *DHHS* Kim Lawson Karl Logan Joe Maimone Julie Pittman, *No Kid Hungry-Share our Strength* Rebecca Planchard, *DHHS* Lauren Richards, *COO, Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools* Carol Stamper, *COO, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools* William Wright, *Superintendent, Hertford County* Will Ray, *Department of Public Safety*
State Board Policy & Legislation	**Chloe Gossage** **Deanna Townsend-Smith**	Ryan Boyce Bo Caldwell, *Superintendent, Henderson County* Geoff Coltrane, *Education Advisor, Governor's Office* Scott Elliott, *Superintendent, Watauga County* Jeff Hauser Derrick Jordan, *Superintendent, Chatham County* Katherine Joyce, *NCASA* Freebird McKinney Mia Murphy Alexis Schauss Eric Snider/Thomas Ziko Rodney Shotwell, *Superintendent, Rockingham County* Catherine Stickney LaTrisha Townsend Sherry Thomas Audrey Altieri

Student Health, Safety & Emotional Needs	Ellen Essick	Nicole Alfaro
		Barbria Bacon
	Angel Goodwine Batts	Fran Harris-Burke
		Meghan Doyle, *Superintendent, Craven County Schools*
	Matt Hoskins	Cynthia Floyd
		Nakisha Floyd
		Susan Gale Perry, *Chief Deputy Secretary, DHHS*
		Lauren Holahan
		Tina Ingram, *Safety Director, Durham Public Schools*
		Anthony Jackson, *Superintendent, Vance County*
		Pachovia Lovett
		Lynn Makor
		Scott Masington, *Safety Director, Henderson County*
		Ann Nichols
		Anne Nixon
		Travis Reeves, *Superintendent, Surry County*
		Beth Rice
		Osmond Lister
		Alisha Shiltz
		Sara Newman
		Angie Cloninger
		Susanne Schmal
		Pachovia Lovett
		Cynthia Floyd
		Lynn Makor
		Les Spell
		Lisa Taylor
		Sherry Thomas
		Robert "Bo" Trumbo
		Que Tucker, *NC High School Athletic Association*
		Robert Van Dyke
		Tabari Wallace, *Principal, Craven County*
		SEL/Crisis Response Contributors

Employee Safety & Support	**Eliz Colbert** **Jeremy Gibbs** **Tom Tomberlin**	Arasi Adkins, *Asst. Superintendent, Durham Public Schools* Valerie Bridges, *Superintendent, Edgecombe County* John Bryant, *Associate Superintendent, Henderson County Public Schools* Chris Coby Kathy Parker Patricia Hollingsworth, *Communications, Durham Public Schools* Cynthia Martin Trey Michael Rebecca Planchard, *DHHS* Shirley Prince, *NCPAPA* Robert Sox Jeff Wallace, *Superintendent, Davie County*
Communications	**Jessica Swencki** **Graham Wilson**	Nicole Alfaro Matt Bristow-Smith, *Principal, Edgecombe County* Eliz Colbert Elaine Darby Ken Derksen, *Communications Director, Wayne County* Lauren Empson, *Forthright Consulting* Jeremy Gibbs Jeff Hauser Patricia Hollingsworth, *Communications, Durham Public Schools* Joe Maimone Freebird McKinney Mia Murphy Rebecca Planchard, *NCDHHS* Todd Silberman Deanna Townsend-Smith Freddie Williamson, *Superintendent, Hoke County*
Graphics Design Team	**Jason Scott**	
Additional Key Contributors		Carol Stamper, *Chief Operating Officer, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools* Jack Hoke, *Executive Director, North Carolina State Superintendent's Association Executive Board (NCSSA)* Tiffany Byrd, *Instructional Coach, Durham Public Schools*

APPENDIX

Exhibit A: Competency-Based Education: A personalized learning approach

Exhibit B: Driver's Education in time of COVID-19

Exhibit C: Formative Assessment and Back-to-School Resources

Exhibit D: NCDHHS Requirements for Public Schools, Summary

Exhibit E: Remote Instruction Plan Guidance

EXHIBIT A: COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

A Personalized Learning Approach

Competency-based learning (CBL) or competency-based education (CBE) involves strategies that provide flexibility in the way that students demonstrate mastery of learning. A competency-based approach involves personalized learning opportunities, which may include strategies utilizing online and Blended Learning, dual enrollment, project-based, and community-based learning, and credit recovery, among others. Competency-based learning is an approach that requires extensive time and planning in order to implement this approach; however, some PSUs might be better positioned to adopt this approach in the fall 2020. Therefore, the following guidance could be beneficial:

NCDPI participates in the REL Southeast Competency-based Education Alliance focused on Competency-Based Education and Personalized Learning. This state-wide group, which includes RTI International, NC Community College System, UNC System, NCICU, and others, meet regularly to ensure a collaborative workspace to research and develop best practice to support the implementation of competency-based education in NC. As a first step, this Alliance developed a definition for use in NC among our partners:

> "As a personalized learning approach, CBE provides a flexible and engaging learning environment in which progression is based on mastery of explicit learning objectives, or competencies, as demonstrated through evidence of student learning, rather than the time spent in a course/topic."

With the approval of North Carolina's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2018, NCDPI committed to the continued transformation of schools and districts across the state from industrial-age practices to digital-age practices. In the digital-age classrooms, all students and educators may have access to unique learning experiences based upon individual needs and aspirations. As such, NCDPI has developed to a framework for Personalized Learning underpinned by four research-based and student-centered pillars: Learner Profiles, Individualized Learning Paths, Competency-Based Progression and Flexible Learning Environments (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Personalized Learning in NC: A Working Definition

Learner Profiles	Individualized Learning Paths	Competency-Based Progression	Flexible Learning Environments
A learner profile represents each student's strengths, weaknesses, preferences, and goals. This data supports the student's ability to self-reflect, set goals, advocate for needs, and monitor progress.	As students set and manage their personal academic goals, a variety of instructional approaches and curriculum materials allow for student choice. The teacher helps students make informed decisions.	Students master topics at their own pace by demonstrating what they know and what they can do. The teacher monitors progress through various assessment types and provides differentiated support.	This setting provides support structure adaptable for students working to meet learning goals. Access to staff, space, time, and resources reflect a responsiveness to individual student needs.

Guidelines for Implementing Competency-Based Learning

Competency-based learning takes time to implement. PSUs who have already begun implementation may decide that competency-based learning is a natural progression for expanded blended and online learning.

- Focuses on student needs through skill mastery.

- Articulates skills that undergird standards.

- Flexes learning path and pace.

- Assures growth for every student when deep understanding is expected

- May address the needs of students of color, English Language Learners (ELs), Exceptional Children (EC), and Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG).

Barriers and Challenges to Competency-Based Learning

- Implementation can require a great amount of thoughtful planning to include, but not limited to the need to:

  ○ Create policies & procedures to support implementation.

  ○ Secure or develop resources to assist with curriculum, instruction and assessment needs.

  ○ Provide professional development for CBL components.

  ○ Identify competencies/skills needed to master each standard.

  ○ Develop varied activities aligned to each skill.

  ○ Utilize data to understand learners, identify gaps and assess progress.

  ○ Develop a theory of change management and address values, beliefs and mindsets.

  ○ Communicate and develop shared understanding with all staff, parents, students and the community.

  ○ Revise grading systems and report cards templates.

  ○ Engage staff in issues of equity and monitor data.

  ○ Revisit implementation of plan and make periodic adjustments.

EXHIBIT B: DRIVER'S EDUCATION, during COVID-19

GUIDANCE FOCUS: Public School Driver Education

Driver Education is a unique program as it has two distinctly different areas where education takes place. Therefore social distancing requirements presently in place do not appear to be (easily) compatible with either the classroom or the in-car phases. Additionally, a restart of the program requires coordination between DPI and DMV.

A priority concern

Driver Education serves non-district enrolled students, **charter, private and home schooled students**. Districts will need to consider how these students will factor into their local plan for screening and/or providing alternate learning opportunities.

PLAN A	PLAN B	PLAN C
Classroom Phase • Provide parents and students appropriate information prior to enrollment. (see link) • Provide appropriate PPE for instructors and students as required by NCDHHS guidance (see link) • Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the level of close contact at distribution sites. • Identify staff who are considered high-risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 as described in Protecting Vulnerable Populations (see link) • Train all staff in Requirements as established by the NCDHHS (see link) before beginning any instructional activities. • Prescreening requirements will need to be established consistent with other district classroom guidelines • Review the Driver Education COVID – 19 safety plan (see link). • Apply requirements for Cleaning and Hygiene requirements and Monitoring for Symptoms established by the NCDHHS (see link) to all areas including . • Adequate space in hallways. • Ensure room size is considered (classrooms are large enough or class sizes are small enough). • Provide spacing when students and staff are in large outdoor spaces. • Adults should maintain appropriate distance if multiple are present in a setting for any purpose		• Remote professional development • Remote Learning Plan Only. • Contracted Commercial schools adhere to DMV Temporary Classroom Requirement

• Consider social distancing to the maximum extent possible at materials distributions • Reminder personal hygiene etiquette such as washing your hands often, covering your mouth when sneezing or coughing, staying at home if you are not feeling well, etc.	
Driving Phase • Provide parents and students appropriate information prior to enrollment. • Prescreening requirements will need to be established consistent with other district classroom guidelines. (see link) • Review the Driver Education COVID – 19 safety plan for in-car checklist (see link). • Provide appropriate PPE for instructors and students as required by NCDHHS guidance (see link) • Apply requirements for Cleaning and Hygiene requirements and Monitoring for Symptoms established by the NCDHHS (see link) to all areas including.	• No in-car driving instruction

EXHIBIT C: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

BACK-TO-SCHOOL RESOURCES for FORMATIVE USE

The Instructional Planning and Scheduling Workgroup developed ready-to-use back to school resources that teachers can use formatively to help guide classroom instruction as well as an overview on Formative Assessment.

Aligned to part of the NC Standard Course of Study for grades 4-8 reading and mathematics, NC Math 1, and NC Math 2, these resources were not developed to be diagnostic but are intended to be used to inform instruction. In addition to the newly developed resources, Passport for Learning and Math Sets, the following includes information on released tests and SchoolNet.

For resources see: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/node/20876

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Overview & Vision

Due to Covid-19 and the increased reliance on remote learning, formative assessment for the 2020-2021 school year is essential. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) understands that as a result of Covid-19, the time to determine students' understanding of the content standards is greater now than perhaps ever before and using formative assessment will support teaching and learning.

Formative assessment is:

- a critical lever to improve student learning;

- a fundamental professional skill for teachers; and

- central to equitable learning.

Critical Factors with Formative Assessment:

- Formative assessment is a process for teachers and students for learning and teaching, not just one assessment tool.

- Formative assessment allows for the teaching and learning of grade-level content standards, including the scaffolding and extending of instruction for proficiency and mastery.

- An over-reliance on below grade-level formative assessment tools and content may result in increased academic gaps for students; using grade-level formative assessment tools will support student progress.

- The use of effective formative assessment practices ensures students have equitable access to high expectations for grade-level content.

- After analysis of standards-based formative assessment data, teachers are able to adapt instruction on-going as needed for the individual student to meet mastery and beyond.

- Note: *No formative assessment data are to be used for rescinding course placement decisions.*

How can my LEA/Charter School learn more about formative assessment?

The Standards, Curriculum & Instruction Division will provide a series of virtual summer professional development opportunities designed to guide teachers toward formatively assessing their students.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

English Language Arts (ELA) Summer 2020 Professional Learning

The ELA team will hold a 3-part professional learning series on formative assessment and scaffolding during the first week of August 2020. This opportunity will be held virtually and will be recorded. Registration information is forthcoming. Follow-up roundtables will be scheduled by grade band throughout the 20-21 school year.

K-12 Math Summer 2020 Professional Learning

The K-12 Math team will hold a 2-part professional learning series on formative assessment and scaffolding during the week of July 7, 2020. These sessions will include office hours for district team support following each presentation day. This opportunity will be held virtually and will be recorded. Registration information is forthcoming.

Communication for the summer offerings will be sent via NCDPI Listservs. Sign up for the Listserves here.

EXHIBIT D: NCDHHS REQUIREMENTS

NCDHHS recommends that schools, students, and families refer to the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) and ongoing updates in their entirety for useful charts and other resources to better review the requirements outlined for health and safety in our schools.

REQUIREMENTS (JUNE 8, 2020)
(In order of appearance in Guidebook sections)

STUDENT & EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY (These blend and are applicable to both sections)

MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS

Schools are required to:

- Enforce that staff and students stay home if:

  ○ They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.

  ○ They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19.

- Conduct symptom screening of any person entering the building, including students, staff, family members, and other visitors. Screening may be provided at the school entrance, prior to arrival at school, or upon boarding school transportation. Example screening tools:

  ○ K – 12 Schools Symptom Screening Checklist: Elementary School Students (Available on pages 16 and 17 of the NCDHHS Toolkit). Designed to be administered to person dropping off a young child.

  ○ K – 12 Schools Symptom Screening Checklist: Middle and High School Students or Any Person Entering the Building (Available on pages 14 and 15 of the NCDHHS Toolkit). Designed to be administered to any person middle-school-aged or older, including students, staff, families, or visitors.

- Conduct daily temperature screenings for all people entering the school facility or boarding school transportation (see note below on optional parent/guardian attestation).

  ○ Fever is determined by a measured temperature of 100.4 °F or greater.

  ○ Individuals waiting to be screened must stand six feet apart from each other. Use tape or other markers on the floor for spacing.

  ○ The staff person taking temperatures must wear a cloth face coverings, and must stay six feet apart unless taking temperature.

  ○ Use a touchless thermometer if one is available.

  ○ If not available, use a tympanic (ear), digital axillary (under the arm), or temporal (forehead) thermometer. Use disposable thermometer covers that are changed between individuals.

  ○ Do not take temperatures orally (under the tongue) because of the risk of spreading COVID-19 from respiratory droplets from the mouth.

○ Staff person must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before touching the thermometer.

○ Staff person must wear gloves if available and change between direct contact with individuals, and must wash hands or use hand sanitizer after removing gloves.

○ Staff person must clean and sanitize the thermometer using manufacturer's instructions between each use.

- Schools may choose to utilize a parent/guardian attestation of a symptom screening for their child in lieu of in-person screening for students who are boarding school transportation. However, a student whose parent/guardian submitted an attestation must be screened upon arrival at the school building.

○ Example attestation tool: K – 12 Schools Symptom Screening: Parent/Guardian Attestation (Available on pages 18 and 19 of the NCDHHS Toolkit).

HANDLING PRESUMPTIVE POSITIVE CASES

Schools are required to:

- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter. Examples of signage such as Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms flyers (English - Color, Black & White; Spanish - Color, Black & White).

- Educate staff, students, and their families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when they can return to school.

- Establish a dedicated space for symptomatic individuals that will not be used for other purposes.

- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals to the designated area at the school, and send them home to isolate.

- Ensure symptomatic student remains under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. The supervising adult should wear cloth face covering or a surgical mask.

- Require the symptomatic person to wear a cloth face covering or a surgical mask while waiting to leave the facility.

○ Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

1. Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.

2. Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

3. Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.

- Require school nurses or delegated school staff need to provide direct patient care to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE. Refer to the Infection Control Supplies Checklist for type of PPE needed, beginning on page 23 of the NCDHHS Toolkit.

- Implement cleaning and disinfecting procedure following CDC guidelines once the sick student/staff leaves.

- Have a plan for how to transport an ill student or staff member home or to medical care.

- Follow the following process for allowing a student or staff member to return to school.

○ If a person has had a negative COVID-19 test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours.

○ If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until they (or a family member if younger child) can answer YES to the following three questions:

1. Has it been at least 10 days since the child first had symptoms?

2. Has it been at least 3 days since the child had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine)?

3. Has it been at least 3 days since the child's symptoms have improved, including cough and shortness of breath?

- Notify local health authorities of confirmed COVID-19 cases among school staff and students and work with them for follow-up and contact tracing.

- Ensure that if a person with COVID-19 was in the school setting while infectious, school administrators coordinate with local health officials to notify staff and families immediately while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS 130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

- If a student/employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they must remain out of school until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

- If a student/employee that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms they are not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.

- If a student/employee has been determined to have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain out of school for 14 days since the last date of exposure unless they test positive. In which case, exclusion criteria above would apply. They must complete the full 14 days of quarantine, even if they test negative.

- Follow the Protocols for Cleaning or Temporary Closure of School Areas, Facilities or Vehicles - coming soon

- Provide remote learning options for students unable to be at school due to illness or exposure

CLEANING & HYGIENE (related to Health and Safety)

Schools are required to:

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children.

- Increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

○ Supervise use of hand sanitizer by students.

○ Ensure that children with skin reactions and contraindications to hand sanitizer use soap and water.

○ Reinforce handwashing during key times such as: Before, during, and after preparing food; Before eating food; After using the toilet; After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals.

- Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into classroom activity.

- Limit sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils.

- Keep students' personal items separate and in individually labeled cubbies, containers or lockers.

- Limit use of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between uses or provide adequate supplies to assign for individual student use.

- Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are minimally handled and washed with hot water and soap or in a dishwasher, or use disposable food service items such as plates and utensils.

EMPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Schools are required to:

- Create a process for students/families and staff to self-identify as high-risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 and have a plan in place to address requests for alternative learning arrangements or work re-assignments.

OPERATIONS

FACILITIES: CLEANING & HYGIENE

Schools are required to:

- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues)

- Allow time between activities for proper cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.

- Establish a schedule for and perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, stair rails, faucet handles, toilet handles, playground equipment, drinking fountains, light switches, desks, tables, chairs, kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, carts, and trays) with an EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increasing frequency of disinfection during high-density times and disinfect all shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) between use. Paper-based materials, such as books and loose-leaf paper, are not considered high-risk for COVID-19 transmission, and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.

- Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at every building entrance and exit, in the cafeteria, and in every classroom, for safe use by staff and older students.

- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.

- Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are minimally handled and washed with hot water and soap or in a dishwasher, or use disposable food service items such as plates and utensils.

TRANSPORTATION

- Clean and disinfect transportation vehicles regularly. Children must not be present when a vehicle is being cleaned.

- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children and adequate ventilation when staff use such products.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle (e.g., surfaces in the driver's cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles) no less than at the beginning and end of each trip.

- Keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.

- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect equipment including items such as car seats and seat belts, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools.

- Follow the symptom screening protocol outlined in the Monitoring for Symptoms section above for any person entering a school transportation vehicle. Individuals must stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone positive for COVID-19.

  - **Note:** Upon arrival at school, students do not need to be rescreened if screening was followed prior to entry into the vehicle. However, as noted above, if a parent/guardian provided an attestation only, students DO need to be screened upon arrival at school.

- (From Monitoring Symptoms section) Conduct daily temperature screenings for all people entering the school facility or boarding school transportation (see note below on optional parent/guardian attestation).

  - Fever is determined by a measured temperature of 100.4 °F or greater.

  - Individuals waiting to be screened must stand six feet apart from each other. Use tape or other markers on the floor for spacing.

  - The staff person taking temperatures must wear a cloth face coverings, and must stay six feet apart unless taking temperature.

  - Use a touchless thermometer if one is available.

  - If not available, use a tympanic (ear), digital axillary (under the arm), or temporal (forehead) thermometer. Use disposable thermometer covers that are changed between individuals.

  - Do not take temperatures orally (under the tongue) because of the risk of spreading COVID-19 from respiratory droplets from the mouth.

  - Staff person must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before touching the thermometer.

  - Staff person must wear gloves if available and change between direct contact with individuals, and must wash hands or use hand sanitizer after removing gloves.

  - Staff person must clean and sanitize the thermometer using manufacturer's instructions between each use.

- Schools may choose to utilize a parent/guardian attestation of a symptom screening for their child in lieu of in-person screening for students who are boarding school transportation. However, a student whose parent/guardian submitted an attestation must be screened upon arrival at the school building.

  - Example attestation tool: K – 12 Schools Symptom Screening: Parent/Guardian Attestation (Available on pages 18 and 19 of the NCDHHS Toolkit).

- Park vehicles in a safe location away from the flow of traffic so that the screening can be conducted safely.

- Create a plan for getting students home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle.

- Enforce that if an individual becomes sick during the day, they must not use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above.

- If a driver becomes sick during the day, they must follow protocols outlined above and must not return to drive students.

- Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) to support healthy hygiene behaviors on all school transportation vehicles for safe use by staff and older children.

  - Hand sanitizer should only remain on school transportation while the vehicles are in use.

  - Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING & MENTAL HEALTH

Coping and Resilience

Schools are required to:

- Provide staff, families, and students (if age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness (e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463)

Communication & Combating Misinformation

Schools are required to:

- Disseminate COVID-19 information and combat misinformation through multiple channels to staff, students and families. Ensure that families are able to access communication channels to appropriate staff at the school with questions and concerns.

  - Some reliable sources include: NC DHHS COVID-19 Webpage, Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash, NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates, NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources, and the additional resources listed at the end of this guidance document.

  - Put up signs, posters, and flyers at main entrances and in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities such as those found on the Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19 to remind students and staff to use face coverings, wash hands, and stay six feet apart whenever possible (Wear, Wait, Wash).

    - Know Your W's signs are available in English and Spanish.

    - Teach students who cannot yet read what the signs' language and symbols mean.

EXHIBIT E: NCDPI Reopening Schools
GUIDANCE FOCUS: REMOTE INSTRUCTION PLANS

Remote Instruction Plans in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

SPLN-006

Adopted by the State Board of Education, May 21, 2020

Each public school unit (PSU) shall develop a Remote Instruction Plan (RI Plan) for the 2020-2021 school year and shall submit its Plan to the State Board no later than July 20, 2020 based on Session Law 2020-30, Senate Bill 704.

The RI Plans will provide a framework for delivering quality remote instruction to all students within the public school unit during the 2020-21 school year. The RI Plans will also provide a foundation for blended learning with flexibility and quality to respond to future COVID-19 disruptions.

Remote Learning Definition:

In NC K-12 public schools, remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or Learning Management Systems (LMS).

FURTHER NCDPI GUIDANCE BELOW:

The Remote Instruction Plan shall include responses for each of the 15 following components. NCDPI has provided guidance for each component on the following pages to support each PSU's development of its remote instruction plan.

REMINDER:

Technical Assistance Tuesdays are available for further professional development.

See NCDPI Remote Learning Information and Resources website for more information

Each PSU must submit the Remote Instruction Plan to NCDPI by July 20, 2020 through the submission directions provided to each RI Plan contact.

COMPONENT 1:

Consulting with teachers, administrators and instructional support staff, parents, students, community partners, and other stakeholders in developing the Plan and effectively communicating the Plan to all involved parties.

GUIDANCE:

Identify Stakeholders

Consulting a wide variety of stakeholders is critical for the development and effective communication of quality remote instruction plans. An important first step towards meaningful engagement is to identify your stakeholder groups. Do stakeholder groups ensure every voice represented? If yes, great! If not, this is a great opportunity to expand your engagement efforts.

Examine Engagement Structures

Once you know you have identified all of the right groups, the next step is ensuring mechanisms are in place to *share and receive information*. Critically review the systems and structures in place to interact with these various stakeholder groups. For example, do you have an active district-level advisory board? School-based PTA/PTOs? Teacher and student advisory councils? Community councils? Grandparents/retirees? How would these groups typically share and receive information from your district/school? Do they understand these systems? Are the details of how and when these groups convene readily available? If you wanted to enlist feedback from all parents in your district/school, what survey tool would you use? How would you distribute this information?

Review Internal Communication Processes & Activate Ambassadors

It is important to remember that every employee in your district/school is an ambassador. All should be empowered to respond to questions, correct misinformation, and direct people to the resources they seek. In order to be good ambassadors, they must have access to pertinent information. Effective Internal communication is the foundation of healthy organizations. If it is important for stakeholders to know and understand, it is important for all staff to know and understand it FIRST. It is imperative that all staff understand the remote instruction plan specifics and the tools to be used to communicate these plans. What systems of internal communication does your system currently employ? Email is a great starting point; however, it must be a communicated expectation that staff read information from the district/school. It is also important to communicate with staff that they are ambassadors and the importance of this role in building public trust.

Identify Key Communicators

Key Communicators are those external stakeholders who have access to accurate information about what is happening in your district/schools. These individuals are often trusted sources of information who have access to broad audiences. Key communicators should be recruited as such and made fully aware of important information.

Communicate HOW You Communicate

Seek input from your advisors about the communications strategies they prefer. What do existing metrics about your engagement efforts tell you about where people are most likely to go for information (ex: website, social media, all-call system, text, etc.). It is absolutely critical that you routinely communicate your communications plan. Helping your stakeholders know how, when, and where to find information reduces frustration and builds confidence. Maintain their confidence by keeping content fresh and updated. Develop a process and identify specific individuals responsible for reviewing and updating website and social media content. Reviewing content and providing feedback is a great task for a trusted

key communicator. Consult with your district PIO or Communications Coordinator to explore other avenues to communicate to your stakeholder groups.

Seek & Apply Feedback

Have you sought feedback on how remote learning went this Spring? This will help to continue what works and tweak or abandon what didn't. When seeking feedback, keep it simple. You may find it useful to use the same questions with each stakeholder group for easy cross-reference. Focus groups, in person or virtual, are also good strategies to gather feedback. As a rule, it is always helpful to define how feedback will be utilized to avoid unnecessary conflict. If you are seeking feedback in an advisory capacity rather than for a democratic process, state that. Once you have gathered feedback, it is important to acknowledge what was received and what, if any action will result.

Note:

The most important thing to remember is that communication is only deemed effective when information is delivered, received, and as a result, all stakeholders have a common understanding.

COMPONENT 2:

Training for teachers and staff on the effective use of the remote instruction resources utilized by the public school unit and the process for student submission of completed work; and identifying any learning management system, online instructional resource, or an offline instructional resources that will be made available to all students in a grade-level across the public school unit.

GUIDANCE:

Professional learning that builds educators' capacities to implement quality remote instruction is necessary for teachers and staff. Personalized, anytime, anywhere training facilitated by formal and informal approaches will support educators as they deliver quality instruction. Professional learning may focus on educators' immediate learning needs such as a PSU's remote instruction resources, the process for submission of student work, online pedagogy, delivery methods, etc. Clear communication of these opportunities will assist with staff engagement in professional learning. In addition, identify any learning management system, online instructional resource, or offline instructional resource that will be made available to all students in a grade-level across the PSU. Consider providing opportunities for educators to collaborate and share grade-level resources as they navigate and create lessons to engage students.

Consider choosing the least number of tools possible and make them consistent across classes/schools to lessen the burden of learning and navigating multiple technologies on all families. It is important to keep platforms and technology tools consistent and standardized as much as possible. Create and communicate a process for training and supporting teachers, families, and students in the use of the virtual tools and platforms that have been selected.

Guiding Questions:

- How will your PSU determine the professional learning needs of your teachers and staff regarding the effective use of the remote instruction PSU resources?

- What formal professional learning opportunities and informal support will be available to meet the needs of your teachers and staff regarding effective use of the remote instruction PSU resources?

- How will you ensure that your PSU's teachers and staff are aware of relevant professional learning opportunities?

- What are your PSU's expectations regarding teachers and staff connecting with students through remote instruction resources?

- What process will be used in your PSU for submission of student work?

- What learning management system, online instructional resource, or offline instructional resource will be available to all students in a grade-level across the PSU?

- How will your PSU effectively communicate this with stakeholders?

- How are you simplifying the number of technology tools teachers, students and families need to learn?

- What processes do you have in place to create consistency of technology platforms and tools being used in a grade level or school?

Resources:

Remote Learning 101

NCDPI DTL: Featured Remote Learning Resources from NC PSUs

Quality Matters: Emergency Remote Instruction Checklist

NCCat Instructure Catalog

Google for Education - Professional Development Handbook

- Fundamentals Training

- Advanced Training

- Digital Citizenship and Safety Training

- Support English Language Learners Course

- Tools for Diverse Learners Training

- Chromebook Training

- Distance Learning For Educators

COMPONENT 3:

Defining and clearly communicating staff roles and expectations for remote instruction days, including teacher workdays, teacher accessibility, and noncertified staff workdays and responsibilities. The Plan may include variances for staff expectations when remote instruction days are also used as teacher workdays.

GUIDANCE:
To be prepared to implement remote instructional days in the 2020-2021 academic year, public school units are required to have a clear instructional plan and expectations for employees on how schools will implement the remote learning day. Public school units (PSUs) are encouraged to consider all staff, both certified and classified, and how their roles and responsibilities will support students' educational, emotional, health, and safety needs. PSUs may want to develop standardized expectations on the length of the workday on remote learning days. PSUs also have the flexibility to temporarily reassign roles and responsibilities for staff during the remote instructional days.

Component of Plan	Considerations
Length of Instructional Day	• PSUs have flexibility in defining the workday. • PSUs are encouraged to define clearly the length of the workday for staff on a remote learning day. • The remote instructional day may be a combination of direct interaction with students, asynchronous engagement, and/or preparation. • Consider allowing flexibility for staff to complete required workday hours outside of conventional school scheduling.
Teacher Work Day	• Schedule remote instructional days as teacher workdays. Teachers may use accumulated annual leave on these days if they have developed remote instructional resources for the day. • Consider developing clear guidelines regarding what constitutes "adequate instructional resources" and the required amount of notice to use annual leave on these days. • Consider requiring points of contact for students whose teachers will be on leave during remote instructional days.
Administrators	In addition to school-based responsibilities, consider how administrators can support remote learning in their schools by: • attending synchronous meetings of classrooms; • reviewing assignments and student work products from those assignments; • offering support for improved remote learning opportunities; • monitoring staff expectations.
Instructional Support Personnel (e.g., Guidance Counselors, Instructional Coaches, School Social Workers, Related Service Providers, Program specialists, etc)	• Develop opportunities for Instructional Support Personnel to sustain the school's instructional program as articulated by leadership. • Consider how these employees will support the social-emotional needs of students and families in a virtual environment. • Consider how these employees will adapt their in-person programming to the offsite programming.
Teachers	• Provide clear expectations for teachers on the components of the remote

	instructional day, such as: ○ direct interaction with students, ○ Providing feedback to students, ○ check-in with students, ○ asynchronous engagement, ○ PLCs, and/or ○ instructional preparation. ● Consider following regular school schedules to avoid meeting conflicts for staff and students. ● Develop roles and responsibilities that support students' educational, emotional, health, and safety needs for **all instructional staff.**
Classified Staff (e.g., custodians, child nutrition, Teacher Assistants, etc.)	● Determine which classified staff must report to work (mandatory) and which staff members may work from a remote location (non-mandatory). ● Regardless of location, develop assignments for remote staff that support the students' educational, emotional, health, and safety needs or the operational needs of the school. ● Should the remote instructional day be due to health concerns, the health status (i.e., "high-risk" designation) of staff members may be considered in the determination of mandatory/non-mandatory.

EXAMPLES:
The following examples are illustrative and should not be considered the requirements of any PSU's plan.

Length of Instructional Day: School staff are expected to be at work or online from 9-4 on remote instructional days. Schools, with central office approval, may shift or distribute the remote instructional day in ways that best support their students and staff while maintaining the required number of total hours. Schools shall deliver, at a minimum, 2 hours of direct interaction with students and 2 hours of asynchronous engagement as part of the instructional day.

Teacher Work Day: Teachers who wish to use annual leave on a remote instructional day (designated as a teacher workday) must submit their instructional resources for approval one week before the scheduled remote instructional day. The content must be sufficient to cover the time designated for direct interaction and asynchronous engagement as prescribed by the central office. Teachers are responsible for designating a point of contact for their students while they are on annual leave to assist students who have questions or concerns.

Administrators: On remote instructional days, school administrators must create a plan that will cover three main duties for the remote instructional day. 1) Logistics of remote learning for students - are there any unexpected teacher absences, hardware or software issues, etc., 2) Management of the physical building - oversee any operations that may be taking place in the school building while students are learning remotely, and 3) Monitoring instruction - visiting the school's virtual learning spaces and ensuring that remote learning plans are being implemented with fidelity and rigor. Administrators should provide support, encouragement, and constructive feedback on the virtual environments he/she observes. 4) Administrators will monitor to ensure teacher expectations are being met during remote instruction days.

Instructional Support Personnel: Guidance counselors may use the virtual environment to convene groups of students as they would in a face-to-face setting. School social workers can compile attendance data from the remote instructional day to assess how absent students could be supported in attending

future remote instructional days. Instructional coaches may work with administrators on providing support to teachers in the virtual learning environment with a focus on how teachers can build on the strengths of the current day to improve future remote learning sessions. Technology Specialists should create a master schedule of all remote learning activities on the remote learning day. These master plans should be available to all staff to ensure coverage of all remote learning sessions in the event of an unexpected absence or to facilitate monitoring by the administrative/coaching staff. Tech specialists could also be on call to all staff engaged in remote learning to troubleshoot any technology issues that arise. Related Service providers determine the provision of appropriate virtual service delivery, based on students' needs and accessibility. AIG program specialists provide direct services online and offline, check-in weekly with students or groups of students to support social/emotional needs, and provide instructional feedback for teachers to ensure DEPs are met during remote instructional days.

Teachers: All instructional staff should have a role in the remote instructional day. Schools should consider whether students will receive instruction in non-core subjects during the course of the remote learning day. If non-core instruction is not provided, a school should consider how non-core teachers will assist with the remote instructional day. Schools may consider having "specials" teachers facilitate small group break-out sessions conducting a "reading circle" with groups of students, providing brief transition breaks (e.g., short exercises to get students moving, a brief discussion about a famous work of art or artist, learning some useful phrases in a foreign language, etc.), or other educational opportunities.

Classified Staff: Schools must have a plan for ensuring meaningful work for classified staff during the remote instructional day. Schools should consider using remote instructional days for addressing activities that may be difficult to complete when students are in session (e.g., maintenance, landscaping, cleaning, etc). If classified staff is permitted to work remotely, those staff members should be given duties that are comparable (in time) to those who are working on-site. The remote staff could develop work schedules, assist with record keeping, create supply orders, etc. Schools should have a plan to identify classified staff who will be designated "mandatory" and "non-mandatory" in the event of a public health crisis. These plans should include how employees' relative health risk is factored into the designation process. Schools should also consider how a modified workday on remote instructional days could impact classified staff's compensation and provide strategies for mitigating loss of wages for these employees.

COMPONENT 4:

Surveying student and teacher home connectivity and providing for remote instruction that is appropriate for teachers and students with limited connectivity capability, including the opportunity for students to download remote learning materials in advance when practicable.

GUIDANCE:

Connectivity is critical to instructional success for students and teachers. Lack of broadband access throughout the state is a major challenge to effective remote instruction. Each PSU will need to survey students and staff to determine the availability of effective Internet access.

Often, students do not know how to evaluate if they have reliable, effective Internet access as many may not have access at home or have connectivity that supports remote instruction online tools. Surveying students and teachers at regular intervals will provide current data to determine how you will account for all students' access to online and/or equitable offline instructional materials.

PowerSchool fields may be utilized to record and report connectivity data. All options for accessing remote learning materials should be widely communicated with all stakeholders in multiple formats and mediums for maximum awareness.

Guiding Questions:

- How has your PSU determined students' and teachers' home connectivity capabilities?

- What barriers to access exist in your PSU?

- How will your district ensure equitable access to instruction and learning materials for students with limited connectivity capability?

- What modifications or non-digital opportunities will be available for teachers and students with limited connectivity capability?

- How will your PSU effectively communicate this with stakeholders?

Resources:

NCDPI DTL Home Access Survey (Google Form - link makes a copy)

CoSN Sample Out-of-School Connectivity Survey

COMPONENT 5:

Engaging with community partners on services that parents and students can utilize on remote instruction days, including community partners willing to provide free broadband access or connectivity for remote instruction and community partners with child care options, and communicating remote instruction schedules with those partners.

GUIDANCE:

It is important to remember your plan is only effective through a collaborative effort by all

community stakeholders. Reviewing, practicing, and updating the plan on a regular basis is essential to ensuring the highest level of success when making a swift shift from face to face to remote learning. Each community has unique local needs as well as varying resources to support those needs. In anticipation of short- and/or long-term disruptions to on-site instruction as a result of this global pandemic, the following questions should be considered:

- How can you build on community strengths and resources and existing relationships to help students and families meet their basic needs during this time (e.g., food, clothing, housing, child supervision, medical services, medication, etc.)?

- How can you work with the community to provide families access to essential resources for distance learning (e.g., technology, internet access, educational supplies)?

- Who at your school/district could be designated to lead the coordination of school-community partnerships?

- Is there a school-community partnership already established that can be mobilized to concentrate on the needs of remote learning?

- How can you establish two-way, ongoing communication to build trust and transparency with community partners?

- What funding sources are available to make sure devices and hotspots are available for all students?

- How will you communicate information about these established community partnerships, the availability of resources, and how to access these with families and the community, including families who may be difficult to contact through traditional means?

Partnership Examples:

- Developing alternative means of instructional delivery including TV programs, if a partnership with television stations is feasible, recorded or streaming live channel of YouTube, podcasts, phones/texting, radio broadcasts, etc.

- Explore partnerships with the private and government sectors and business partners in securing the resources to provide devices and connectivity. Consider local businesses, community colleges or local Smart Start/Partnership for Children to set up guest wifi access that does not require a password.

- Building partnerships between schools and higher education institutions to augment the capacity of districts and school systems to provide adequate professional development to teachers and to families. Perhaps consider learning opportunities for families on how they might support children's learning in a remote or Blended Learning environment.

- Building an alliance with a broad audience including community agencies (like the YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, **local Smart Start/Partnership for Children**, etc), local government,

Chamber of Commerce, health-related groups (including hospitals/clinics), faith-based organizations, and institutions of higher education.

- Involving all levels of stakeholders including teachers, families, internet service providers, local businesses and community centers with available connectivity, food banks, and other social services entities.

- Developing a plan to use school facilities and/or public libraries as community hubs/service centers. Planning should include building an integrated service center to support families and communities while supporting high-quality instruction (i.e. tutoring, parking lot wifi zones, other community partners that may have accessible sites).

Resources:

COVID-19 INTERNET SERVICE OFFERINGS

North Carolina Department of Information Technology has compiled a list of new and existing free or affordable service offerings from vendors across the state.

https://www.ncbroadband.gov/covid19broadband/

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Child Care Resources

https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#child-care

COMPONENT 6:

Developing effective design and delivery of remote instruction lessons within professional learning communities.

GUIDANCE:

Effective design and delivery of remote instruction lessons within professional learning communities should be reflective of the seven instructional design principles:

1. Instructional Time

2. Connection to Families & Students

3. Student Engagement Aligned to Standards

4. Equity, Choice, & Flexibility

5. Feedback on Student Work

6. Collaboration among Students

7. Social & Emotional Learning

The design principles are overarching and applicable to various types of remote learning environments and contexts. The principles should be applied with the understanding that students and teachers approach remote learning with varying access to devices and the Internet. The design principles operate in conjunction with one another and can best be understood through the graphic shown in the figure below.
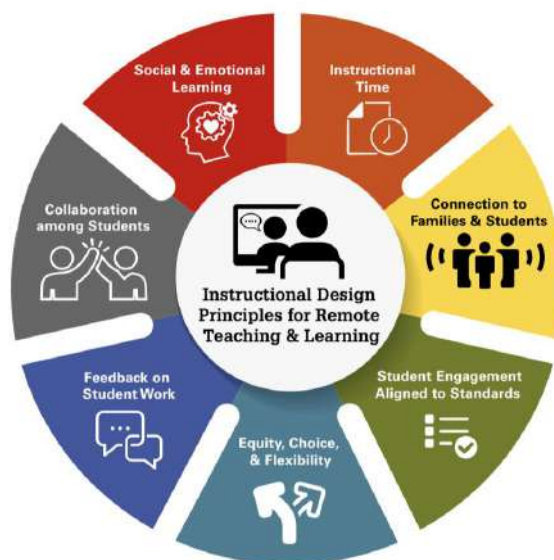
Establishing and promoting Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provides opportunities for educators to collaborate and share resources to create engaging lessons. Consider how your PSU will promote PLCs that foster collaboration for the development of effective remote instruction lessons, ideas, resources, and activities. PLCs may enable teachers and staff to deliver remote instruction successfully. Resources such as Home Base applications can be leveraged to support PLCs.

High-quality remote instruction is achieved as a result of the collaborative efforts of a professional learning community. While site-based staff forms the core of a PLC, professional learning communities must expand beyond the school walls and into online platforms to create a larger learning network for teachers. Online platforms provide connections to much-needed support, such as:

- Business leaders

- Local City/Town leaders

- Community College/university leaders

- Religious Community, and

- Non-profit organizations.

All members working together at the start of the development of the remote learning plan will ensure each member is aware of, and has buy-in to, their role in ensuring learning continues during remote learning days.

- How will your PSU leverage PLCs to develop remote learning lessons?

- What PSU delivery platforms, methods, resources, etc. will enable teachers and staff to engage in PLCs?

- What is your PSU's plan to transition from face to face PLCs to virtual PLCs as needed for remote learning?

- How will your PSU gather information on teacher and staff participation in PLCs?

Resources:

Instructional Design Principles for Remote Learning

Teaching Remotely in Times of Need

NCDPI ELA Choice Boards

Tips and Tools for Teaching Remote Learning

Learning Continuity WebinarsSupporting Teacher Learning & Development During Remote Instruction

Smart brief for discussion

COMPONENT 7:

Teaching and practicing opportunities for students on accessing and using remote instruction platforms and methods, including how to locate, complete, and submit assignments; and including regular opportunities for students to use the platforms and methods during non-remote instruction days to ensure student success during remote instruction.

GUIDANCE:

Students need to practice for successful remote instruction during non-remote instruction school days to ensure student success. It is important that there are many opportunities on non-remote instruction days to learn and practice protocols for finding, completing, and submitting assignments and materials using the same platforms students will be expected to access during remote instruction. NCDPI recommends that each PSU provides clear communication and practice on resources that are available and supported for remote instruction, including learning management platforms, acceptable forms of communication, and approved digital tools that may be used by teachers and students.

Guiding Questions:

- What PSU resources are available for remote instruction?

- How will your PSU offer learning opportunities for students on accessing and using remote instruction platforms and methods, including how to locate, complete, and submit assignments?

  ○ What is your PSU's plan to communicate these expectations to stakeholders?

- What teaching and learning guidelines will your PSU make available to teachers regarding remote instruction?

- What is your PSU's plan to gauge student success on accessing and using remote instruction platforms and methods, including how to locate, complete, and submit assignments?

  ○ How will your PSU communicate this to stakeholders?

- How will your PSU leverage blended instruction during non-remote instruction days to ensure student success during remote instruction?

Resources:

Passport to Canvas: Student Tutorials

Passport to Canvas consists of nine modules of content for students. The modules are designed to teach students everything they need to know about using Canvas.

Growing with Canvas: Teacher Tutorials

Growing with Canvas has five modules of content for teachers. The modules are designed to teach educators everything they know about using Canvas.

Be The Hero: District LMS Administrator Tutorials

Be The Hero has five modules of content for district Canvas Administrators.

COMPONENT 8:

Communicating learning targets to students on each remote instruction day and ensuring that lesson design provides instructional time, practice, and application components to demonstrate learning; and including a process for monitoring the quality of remote instruction materials.

GUIDANCE:

Clear learning targets are essential for assessment *for* the learning *of* learning. They provide the foundational framework for all aspects of the learning, teaching, and assessment processes.

What is a clear learning target?

- Designed in student-friendly language "I can..." and "I know..." statements.

- Demonstrate what students will be able to do.

- Consists of concept (noun), skill (verb) and often a specified context so students perceive the information as interesting and relevant.

- Directly reflect learning goals: Accomplished in a few days at most.

- Specific to what and how: Empowering students to take ownership of their own learning.

Learning targets are best communicated when:

- Posted daily for students to see;

- Discussed with students at the beginning of the lesson;

- Reviewed with students at the end of the lesson and

- Informally assessed to monitor student understanding

Curriculum (What are we teaching?)

- Develop lessons aligned to required standards

- Clearly define and post the learning target and/or expected outcome

- Communicate and post the learning target in student/family-friendly terms

- Select appropriate grade-level materials, resources, and/or platform to support the learning target

- Consider and create aligned lessons to support all learners (ie. IEPs, 504s, DEPs, etc.)

Instruction (How are we delivering?)

- Incorporate modeling opportunities to support various learning styles.

- Consider appropriate instructional models based on the learning target/desired outcome

  - Gradual Release "I do, You do, We do" or Inquiry-Based "You, We do, I do"

- Provide opportunities for student-guided and independent practice with feedback.

- Identify the most appropriate instructional delivery method

  - Teacher-Led, Self-Paced, Choice Menus, Project-Based Lessons, Paper/Pencil

- Include high-quality differentiated activities and engaging programs to support critical thinking and understanding (Blooms, DOK, SAMR, etc.)

Deployment (Where/When are we teaching?)

- Establish routines/processes for aligned deployment (staff, student, parent expectations)

- Define the amount of time to be spent teaching the learning target.

- Define the amount of time to complete the assignment.

- Establish suggested virtual time limits (consider age, individual limitations, etc.)

- Balance collaborative and independent opportunities for students

Monitoring/Assessment (How did we do?)

- Pre-assess student knowledge of the learning target

- Determine how students will demonstrate learning (Artifacts, Notes, Organizers, Interactive Lessons/Tools, etc.)

- Determine how to monitor student learning throughout the instructional process

- Assess student learning through various tools and respond to ongoing data.

- Create a clear process for:
  - Lesson Submission (Teacher to School Administrator)
  - Assignment Submission (Student to Teacher)
  - Ongoing Feedback (Administrator to Teacher, Teacher to Student)
  - Response to Instruction (reteach, intervention, etc.)
  - Evaluation Rubrics
  - Data collection

COMPONENT 9:

Ensuring that remote instructional time, practice, and application components support learning growth that continues towards mastery of the standard course of study; and including work measurement guidelines appropriate to each grade level, including deadlines for submission of assignments and methods to assess and grade learning during remote instruction.

GUIDANCE:

Instructional time, practice, and application components must support learning growth that continues towards mastery of the standard course of study. This includes work measurement guidelines appropriate to each grade level, including guidelines for submission of assignments and methods to assess and grade learning during remote learning.

Instructional time expectations in a remote setting will differ from instructional time in a traditional face-to-face setting. Considerations to student time in virtual meetings or other conferencing systems should be well-planned and appropriate to the students' learning while also remaining mindful of the social and emotional connection.

Designing student practice and application components that work toward mastery should also include consideration of student and teacher access to connectivity and devices. Both online and offline versions of practice should be made readily available to ensure equity regarding connectivity and devices. Practice toward mastery should include collaboration among students, as students need social interaction and collaborative opportunities in the remote learning environment. Collaboration should happen multiple times each week through standards-aligned, yet simple lessons that can be completed in a manageable amount of time.

Teacher feedback on student work can greatly impact student learning and motivation. Rich teacher feedback is even more critical in a remote instruction environment. Remote learning should consist of ongoing monitoring and formatively assessing students to ensure that student learning continues toward mastery of the standard course of study.

Regular and timely feedback through both virtual and non-virtual means, to support varying access to devices and connectivity, is vital for supporting students in the remote learning environment. Formative assessment options range in type, structure, length, and other ways.

Examples of Remote Learning Instructional Time:

- Instructional time will vary based on student level and content area.

- Having regular and predictable opportunities to connect will help establish routine.

Examples of Student Practice and Application Components during Remote Learning:

- Student practice and application must be aligned to the standards.

- Engaging students will help maintain student interest and assignment completion.

- Student practice and application should consist of opportunities for students with and without access to devices and connectivity.

- Student practice and application components should be designed with the understanding that students likely will have limited adult support and supervision.

- Providing parents with resources to assist with student practice and application components will aid in student growth toward mastery of the standards.

- Utilizing choice boards and other opportunities for student voice and choice will aid in increased engagement and a greater flexibility based on students' access to connectivity and devices.

Examples of Providing Feedback to Students During Remote Learning (i.e. Formative Assessment):

- Teacher discretion should dictate additional support to students based on formatively assessing the students through various means, such as--but not limited to--virtual exit slips, yes and no buttons through applications, private chats applications, and digital tools.

COMPONENT 10:

Ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to the remote instruction provided by their public school units and that remote instruction is provided in a manner consistent with each student's individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan. Remote learning day supports shall be considered and included, as appropriate for the student, when an IEP or 504 plan is initially developed or at any subsequent review or revision of an IEP or 504 plan.

GUIDANCE:

The determination of what is appropriate and possible educational for all students will be influenced by health and safety considerations, as well as what is possible and appropriate under the current circumstances. It is understood that the provision of educational services may vary widely from one district to another, and that not all students will have the same level of access to services, despite the best efforts of school districts.

Special Education and Related Services

Schools must provide FAPE "consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students".[OSEP Supplemental Fact Sheet-March 21, 20203] "However, federal disability law provides flexibility in determining how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The determination of how FAPE is to be provided may need to be different in this time of unprecedented national emergency". [OSEP Supplemental Fact Sheet, March 21, 2020]

The provision of FAPE may "include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online or telephonically".

Students with disabilities (SWD) are general education students first. SWD must be provided equal access to the same educational opportunities provided to non-disabled peers. (OSEP Q and A, Q A- 1, March 12, 2020) Additionally, SWD should have access to their specially designed instruction and related services outlined in their IEP "to the greatest extent possible".[OSEP FAQ, March 12, 20204]

Carefully consider the following:

- It will be important that EC teachers collaborate with General Education teachers to provide accessibility to grade-level remote learning opportunities and provide accommodations/modifications as appropriate based on the student's unique needs and circumstances.

- The EC teacher/service provider is expected to make every reasonable effort to communicate and collaborate with the parents regarding the student's accommodations/modifications and the provision of special education and related services.

- The EC Division strongly recommends a log of remote learning provided or offered be kept by all EC service providers.

- The date, time (beginning and end), mode of instruction (video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems, etc.), IEP goals addressed and progress monitoring data are important elements to include in the log.

It is understood that even when districts act in good faith to provide all students with meaningful access, the very nature of the student's disability or other circumstances may impede their ability to meaningfully access their specially designed instruction during times of remote learning.

If the LEA believes that it may not be possible to provide the IEP and related services as stated in the IEP, communication and collaboration with the parent is critical and should be documented.

Resources:

US Department of Education Supplemental Fact Sheet: Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities, March 21,2020.

US Department of Education Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak, March 12, 2020.

COMPONENT 11:

Tracking and reporting attendance on remote instruction days, including protocols for determining attendance, the reporting system to be used, and how attendance procedures will be communicated to parents before remote instruction begins.

GUIDANCE:

Attendance in a remote instruction environment is designed to keep students engaged, ensure they are on pace, and to offer academic and emotional support. Unlike attendance in a building where students are marked for being physically present, in remote learning the students home environment and connectivity limitations will impact how and when students complete assignments. Maintaining communication with students and their families and finding an efficient way to do so is more important to maintain a successful learning environment. Consider setting up virtual office hours and reaching out to families by phone or email, teachers may consider using various technology tools for routine check-ins.

Guiding Questions:

- How will I communicate remote attendance procedures to students, parents, teachers, support services, related services, etc.?

- How will we monitor to ensure attendance protocols are being followed?

How do I track and report attendance on remote instruction days?

On remote learning days, daily attendance must be taken in the student information system, PowerSchool.

A student is considered present for daily attendance during a remote learning day:

- If a student completes their daily assignments, either online or offline;

    and/or

- If a student has a daily check-in, a two-way communication, with the appropriate teacher(s):

    ○ In grades K-5, homeroom teacher

    ○ In all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled

NOTE: A student cannot be considered absent solely due to not logging into an online resource/lesson on a remote learning day.

How do I communicate attendance procedures to students/families?

It is a local decision on how to communicate the attendance procedures to students and parents/families before remote instruction begins.

Considerations for communication:

- Include information in Back-to-School/Orientation resources

- Include information in weekly principal calls

- Have every teacher add to Beginning of the Year class information

- Remind parents/students when a student is not in attendance with this information

Additional Calendar information:

NCDPI has authorized the addition of three Calendar DayTypes to use for remote learning days that have been added to the Student Information System.

1. **Remote Instruction Day**: This Calendar Day Type is intended to describe instructional days when students and teachers will be working remotely.

2. **Remote Instruction Day / Teacher Work Day:** This Calendar Day Type is intended to describe instructional days when students will be working remotely and teachers will be expected to attend for an official teacher workday or use leave.

3. **Remote Instruction Day / State of Emergency:** This Calendar Day Type is intended to describe instructional days when students and teachers will be working remotely because North Carolina has declared a state of an emergency necessitating school closures.

On a remote learning day, the PSU marks the days on their calendar as in-session and uses one of the scenarios above as the calendar type. It is critical that these days are listed as in-session to count as a school day.

COMPONENT 12:

Providing online and offline contact options for students to communicate with teachers or staff for remote instruction days that are not used as teacher workdays.

GUIDANCE:

To ensure optimal student engagement in remote learning, PSUs are encouraged to incorporate reliable communications tools as well as processes and protocols that are widely communicated and available for students to seek timely assistance during remote instruction.

Examples:

- Designate a primary technical assistance contact for student/parent questions.

- Develop communications protocols for students to seek assistance from individual teachers during remote learning.
  - Examples include:
    - Live online 'office hours';
    - Live offline 'office hours' via phone;
    - Designated chat room times online;
    - Email communication with assurance of timely response;
    - Designated phone call times for students who do not have online access; School and individual teacher usage of phone messaging systems.

COMPONENT 13:

Providing technology support for students experiencing technical difficulties on remote instruction days.

<u>**GUIDANCE:**</u>

Successful remote instruction must include technical support for students experiencing technical difficulty away from school. Students cannot be successful with remote instruction if they are unable to access the content, login, need connectivity support, or access to online resources. Through remote technical support most software or user error related issues can be resolved. Reliable remote technical support provides students a safety net to continue instruction.

Methods of providing effective technology support remotely, include:

- Phone or email help desks/hot lines

- Online chat portals

- Remote support with screen sharing

- Ticketing systems with communicated resolution expectation times

Options for hardware support of school-provided devices may include centralized repair centers that offer either immediate repairs or loaner device swaps where feasible. Consider a ticketing system that will allow the IT staff to easily keep track of all requests for remote technology support. Further, ensure IT staff are well-versed not only in the remote support tools and methods selected by the PSU but also in communications and customer service. Students and families who receive effective and courteous technical support when needed are more likely to experience success with remote instruction.

Guiding Questions:

- How will your PSU provide online and/or offline technology support for students experiencing technical difficulties on remote instruction days?

- What is your PSU's communication plan to ensure that stakeholders are aware of technology support that is available on remote instruction days?

- How will your PSU provide training to build IT staff's capacity to provide effective and courteous technology support on remote instruction days?

- How will your PSU safely manage device repairs or replacements during periods of remote instruction?

Resources:

How IT Staff Provide Tech Support During Remote Learning

COMPONENT 14:

Responding to how the needs of English learners, Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted learners and students who have been identified and are served under the McKinney-Vento Act as homeless will be met during remote instruction during remote instruction.

GUIDANCE:

***English Learners (ELs)**:*

> "Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), public schools must ensure that EL students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs. EL programs must be reasonably calculated to enable EL students to attain English proficiency and meaningful participation in the standard educational program comparable to their never-EL peers.

Guiding Questions:

1. How are the unique needs of ELs being addressed/met during remote learning days?

2. How has the LIEP been adapted for remote learning?

3. How are ESL teachers being included in the planning and delivery of remote instruction?

4. How are you ensuring that parents receive communications (written and oral) in a language they can access?

Resources:

- The U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)

- USED Tool Kits: Newcomers and English Learners

- Fact Sheet: Providing Services to English Learners During the COVID-19 Outbreak (May 18, 2020)

- ELD Google Site: Resources for ELs During Remote Learning

- NCDPI EL identification during school closure

- Providing English Learners Equal Access to Curricular and Extracurricular Programs, EL ToolKit, Chapter 4.

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Learners

Based on General Statute § 115C-150.5, each local board of education has established a plan which outlines the different types of services provided in a variety of settings to meet the diverse needs of identified academically or intellectually gifted students.

In keeping with this charge, as schools have shifted to remote learning across the state, NCDPI encourages all PSUs to continue efforts to differentiate instruction with learning opportunities to enrich, extend, and accelerate the NC Standard Course of Study for AIG and advanced learners and to find ways to support their social and emotional learning needs during this time.

NCDPI also encourages PSUs to consider the continuum of services available in the official Local AIG Plan and determine ways in which these services can be delivered effectively via remote learning means.

Guiding Questions:

- How is the PSU continuing to identify students who demonstrate a need for gifted programming, during remote learning?

- How will your service delivery options be provided remotely?

- For the upcoming year, how will the DEP be revised to include potential remote learning opportunities and expectations? If not the DEP, how will you communicate clearly the expectations for AIG learners and personnel?

- How has the AIG staff (personnel) been included in the planning for remote learning at each grade level?

- How will communication with students and families continue through a variety of modes described in the local AIG Plan?

Examples:

- Meet with students through online or offline platforms for services, enrichment, extension, and acceleration.

- Establish minimum expectations for AIG staff (personnel) to conduct weekly check-ins with students and parents.

- Work with classroom teachers to provide extension and acceleration opportunities (via online learning management system and paper and pencil packets for those who need print materials).

- Continue differentiated instruction and courses, ensuring advanced learning opportunities are provided.

- Utilize the NCDPI Advanced Learning Labs with students K-12 through the AIG staff (personnel) or other classroom teachers through online platforms and/or sending home in packets or other offline strategies.

Resources:

NCDPI Remote Learning Resources in partnership with Duke TIP and NCAGT

NC AIG Program Standards

NCAGT Teaching Online: Best Practices, Technology, and Tools

NAGC Parenting Tip Sheet

HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH GUIDANCE

Services for Homeless students as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act may be provided through programs on school grounds or at other facilities (e.g., shelters and nonprofit community social service centers). To the maximum extent practical, services shall be provided through programs and mechanisms that integrate children and youth experiencing homelessness with their housed peers. Activities undertaken must not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youth.

 Authorized Activities in the Law:

- Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services

- Professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of homeless children and youth

- Expedited evaluations or referral services for medical, dental, mental, and other health services

- Assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation

- Services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, in public school programs

- Before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities.

- The payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youths in school

- Education and training to the parents of homeless children and youths about the rights of and resources

- Coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youths.

- Pupil services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services.

- Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youths that may arise from domestic violence.

- The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities

- School supplies, including those supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities

- Extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children and youths to attend school

How can my PSU respond to homeless students during the pandemic?

- Tutoring online or at a safe location before school, after school, weekends, or during summer break

- Access to summer educational programs and supplemental afterschool programs

- Purchasing educational technology hardware, software, and connectivity devices

- Educational resources for remote learning

- Mental health services and supports including Trauma-Informed training

- Establishing or adapting space for homeless education staff

- Outreach activities and for the delivery of services to homeless students

- Paying for the homeless liaison in part or in full

Questions to Consider:

- Does the expense meet the intent of the law and be categorized as one of the authorized activities?

- Does the expense cover services that apply only to the homeless education program and its efficiency?

- Is the expense reasonable in proportion to the rest of the program budget and the amount spent per student?

- Is the expense for supplemental services?

- Could this service be obtained from another source?

- Have you consulted with your homeless liaison and reviewed the program needs assessment?

Related Resources:

- NC Homeless Education Program (NCHEP) https://hepnc.uncg.edu/

- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) https://nche.ed.gov/

- The Law & Non-Regulatory Guidance https://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html

- State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, Lisa Phillips @ lephilli@uncg.edu or call 336-315-7491

COMPONENT 15:

Describing the limitations that exist for implementation of quality remote learning based on each public school unit's local context.

GUIDANCE:

Variances between PSUs create many challenges. While many PSUs have resources that help them to prepare faster for remote instruction, others have limitations that create barriers to effective blended and remote learning.

All PSUs are encouraged to describe the limitations that they are navigating to implement quality remote instruction to share the context of your PSU.

Limitations may include:

- Broadband Connectivity

- Devices

- Professional Development

- Instructional resources/Digital Content

- Qualified teachers, licensed

- Transportation

- Child Care

- Child Nutrition

OPTIONAL COMPONENTS:

In the RI Plans, public school units are also encouraged to consider adding information regarding:

- Providing students and parents/families with remote learning strategies and behaviors to support success; and

- Impact on other existing programs, such as Transition to Kindergarten and Career and College Promise.

GUIDANCE:

Remote Learning Strategies and Behaviors to Support Success:

NCDPI encourages each PSU to clarify the behavioral expectations to support student and family success across a variety of remote instructional settings. It is critical to Develop, Teach and Model Behavior Expectations for Remote Learning. Consider defining standards for student engagement, the agreed upon acknowledgement system, appropriate responses to problem behavior and other procedures used with all students.

Resources:

- NCDPI SEL/Crisis Response Recommendation #5: Develop, Teach and Model Behavior Expectations for Remote Learning

- NCDPI SEL Resource:

- NCDPI MTSS Resource: Positive Acknowledgement System

- Creating a PBIS Behavior Teaching Matrix for Remote Learning

- CASEL: SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook

Transition to Kindergarten:

Questions to consider for students transitioning into kindergarten during COVID19:

1. Do you have a process for families to register students for kindergarten and upload required documentation digitally (ex. Kindergarten Health Assessment form, immunization records, student and family information forms, proof of residency, etc.)? Can this be done digitally following digital security protocols to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII)?

2. For families who have limited access to technology and/or internet connectivity, do you have a plan for creating a staggered schedule for in-person registration following safety guidelines and procedures for schools?

3. How will kindergarten staff connect with individual incoming kindergarten students and their families to promote a smoother transition and positive relationships? Will this occur virtually using a video conferencing tool so that the children, their families, and kindergarten staff can see each other? How will kindergarten staff plan for continued interactions, individual and class communication, and parent-teacher conferences during remote learning?

4. How will kindergarten staff inform families of the standards for kindergarten and most importantly, provide support for families as they support their child's instruction in the home?

5. How will you include typical transition activities into the district's remote learning plan (i.e. staggered entry, meet the teacher, classroom/school tours, etc.)? Think about how these could be

accomplished virtually while making them as welcoming as possible, particularly for families who have not experienced kindergarten entry with an older child.

6. How will your schools conduct a Kindergarten Orientation with social-distancing in mind? Will there be a plan to host a virtual orientation? Will there be a plan to schedule an in-person Kindergarten Orientation following safety guidelines and procedures for schools for families with limited access to technology and broadband internet?

7. How will schools provide and review the Kindergarten Orientation print materials and forms to be completed by families if schools are closed at the beginning of the year? How will families return the forms once they have completed them? Can this be done digitally following digital security protocols to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII)?

8. Does your communication plan to inform families and the community of new processes for kindergarten registration and transition activities such as Kindergarten Orientation include other child-serving agencies such as Head Start, NCPK, the local Smart Start/ Partnership for Children, your local health department, and the local HHS? Does your communication plan include various modes of communication such as the use of robocalls and email to families with children already in the school system, public service announcements, fliers in the windows of community stores and in doctors' offices, etc?

9. How might you work with local child-serving organizations to identify and locate rising kindergarteners and their families to begin making early contacts prior to the school year (email or phone)?

10. How might you work with your local NCPK contract administrator to review the list of rising NCPK students provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services to reach out to families who the NCPK providers have lost contact with during the COVID-19 crisis?

11. Have you considered the virtual tools and platforms that are available for use by teachers and students for remote learning? Consider choosing the least number of tools possible and make them consistent across schools to lessen the burden of learning and juggling new technology on all families.

12. Have you created and communicated a process for training and supporting families and students in the use of the virtual tools and platforms that have been selected?

Career and College Promise:

PSUs are strongly encouraged to develop and/or modify a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the college partner to clarify all CCP opportunities, policies, and procedures, in relation to potential COVID-19 disruptions in learning.

Questions to consider for COVID-19:

- With the possibilities of needing to be flexible with blended learning, how will that occur with your college?

- How will CCP process for enrollment, communication, and implementation work during remote learning times for the 2020-21 school year?

- Is there a clear process for transitioning students in and out of school buildings? College buildings? How will requirements for K-12 schools impact the college and vice versa?

- How will there be an extra focus on social/emotional support for CCP students during this time, especially when they are in two different learning settings?

- What are the impacts for students who fail CCP courses, including courses used to satisfy high school graduation requirements? possible impacts on college admissions and financial aid?

- Are there needs to revisit course offerings to ensure success during this time of COVID-19?

The RI Plan will be written following NCDPI guidelines and submitted by July 20, 2020 using the template and process shared with all public school units on June 5, 2020.

In addition, public school units shall submit feedback to NCDPI to support completion of any further reporting requirements so that NCDPI can submit the legislatively required report to the NC General Assembly/Joint Legislative Education Committee by September 15, 2020.

The report will include:

- Identifying all offline and online resources by PSU

- PSUs who only used offline resources

- The number and percentage of PSUs that did and did not provide a plan addressing each item

- A copy of each Remote Instruction Plan

Note: The development of the SPLN-006 policy took into consideration feedback provided by Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Superintendents Remote Learning Taskforce, CAO Advisory Group, CTE Steering Committee and internal NCDPI Directors.