

*For questions and answers related to summer learning and activities, refer to the Summer Learning and Activity Guidance promulgated by the Nevada Department of Education dated June 9, 2020.*

### **School Reopening Plans**

**Question: Declaration of Emergency Directive 022 says that districts and schools shall develop plans for reopening school buildings. Who must participate in the development of reopening plans?**

**Answer:** State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jhone Ebert issued a [letter](#) to district and school leaders on May 6, 2020 indicating the expectation that reopening committees would include: classroom teachers, building administrators, other licensed educational personnel, support staff, parents, union representatives, district/school personnel with expertise in social-emotional health, and district/school personnel with expertise in emergency planning, school nurses, and local public health officials and emergency managers.

As stated in the *Framework for a Safe, Efficient, and Equitable Return to School Buildings*, districts and schools should prioritize clear and consistent communication with school communities and implement transparent plan development processes that provide multiple opportunities for community feedback. Without effective communication, there is a potential for distrust, the spread of misinformation, and a lack of compliance with re-opening plans that can ultimately put health and safety at risk.

#### **Q2: Who must approve reopening plans?**

**A:** Directive 022 requires county school districts, charter schools, and private schools to present and receive approval for their reopening plans for the 2020-21 school year from their governing body as follows:

1. County school districts shall present their plans to the trustees for the county school district for approval in a public meeting at least 20 days before the first day of the 2020-2021 school year;
2. Charter schools shall communicate to their school community, including parents and staff, and present their plans for approval in a manner prescribed by their sponsor at least 20 days before the first day of the 2020-2021 school year; and
3. Private schools shall communicate to their school community, including parents and staff, and present their plans for approval in the manner prescribed by their governing body at least 20 days before the first day of the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Distance Education & In-Person Instruction**

**Q3: Directive 022 says summer learning and 2019-20 extended school year may be provided through distance education under an approved Emergency Program of Distance Education. Do we need to request additional approval or is our approval from March still active?**

**A:** All districts and charter schools that received approval from the Superintendent of Public Instruction for an Emergency Program of Distance Education may continue operating under that approval through the end of summer learning and extended school year 2019-20 programming. The Superintendent of Public Instruction retains the authority to revoke approval of Emergency Programs that fail to meet expectations.

**Q4: Will districts/schools be able to operate under Emergency Programs of Distance Education for the 2020-21 school year?**

**A:** No; Emergency Programs of Distance Education will conclude at the end of summer learning and end of school year 2019-20 programming. Per Directive 022, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will prescribe minimum requirements and a timeline for each county school district and charter school to develop, receive governing board approval for, and submit to the Department of Education a plan for a

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Path Forward Program of Distance Education for the 2020-21 school year. Such plans may be included in reopening plans as required by Section 1 of Directive 022. Path Forward Programs of Distance Education plans will contemplate 2020-21 school year instruction offered through distance education, in-person education, and a combination of both. *Specific guidance from the Department of Education regarding Path Forward Programs of Distance Education is forthcoming.*

### **Q5: Will school buildings be open for in-person instruction for the 2020-21 school year?**

**A:** Directive 022 allows school districts, charter schools, and private schools to keep school buildings and/or facilities closed to students, staff, parents/guardians, and/or the public at their discretion in the interest of the health and safety of their school community. For the 2020-21 school year, districts/schools may ultimately offer instruction through:

1. Distance education under an approved Path Forward Program of Distance Education;
2. In-person instruction following strict social distancing protocols; or
3. A combination of distance education and in-person instruction.

While social distancing and behavioral change measures have been effective in reducing the risk of spreading and contracting COVID-19 and the immediate danger to Nevadans from the COVID-19 disease has diminished, the disease has not been eliminated. Measures that protect safety, wellbeing, and public health of Nevadans will remain in effect. Districts and Schools will be required to adhere to directives and NDE guidance throughout the re-opening. While those directives and guidance may evolve to reflect changes in the situation, at any point in time, the current guidance will need to be upheld. Therefore, districts/schools may plan to re-open in the fall under current social distancing and public health protocols, however, circumstances regarding COVID-19 are fluid and social distancing protocols and other health and safety requirements are subject to change based on the advice of public health officials, including the State's Chief Medical Officer. Therefore, as described in the *Framework for a Safe, Efficient, and Equitable Return to School Buildings*, districts/schools should create reopening plans to address multiple potential reopening scenarios.

### **Q6: Will the six feet of social distancing and 50%/50-person capacity limit be in place at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year?**

**A:** Please refer to the answer above regarding planning to address multiple potential reopening scenarios. At this time, districts/schools should plan for at least one scenario in which individuals will have to remain six feet apart and no single space on a school site may be occupied at greater than 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever is lower.

### **Other Questions**

#### **Q7: Do districts/schools have to address every component of the *Framework* in their reopening plans?**

**A:** The *Framework* is based on public health guidance, best practice resources from national and state organizations, and the expertise of members of the statewide Re-Opening of Schools Committee. The *Framework* is designed to help districts and schools make community-based decisions regarding the reopening of school buildings and builds on their unique strengths to address local challenges. The *Framework* serves as a starting point for conversations, but it is *not* formal guidance or a directive. Districts and schools may apply the concepts and guidelines of the Framework at their discretion and as relevant to local circumstances.

In addition, per Directive 022, districts/schools should adhere to all applicable re-opening guidelines and protocols promulgated by the Nevada State Occupational Safety and Health Association (NV OSHA), the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel (LEAP), and the Centers for Disease Control regarding cleaning practices, quarantine protocols, and social distancing to the maximum extent practicable.

Section 6 of Directive 022 directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to prescribe minimum requirements and a timeline for districts and charter schools to develop, receive governing board approval for, and submit a plan for a Path Forward Program of Distance Education for the 2020-21 school year. It is anticipated that the distance education plans can be included in and receive governing board approval simultaneously with the reopening plans required under Section 1 of Directive 022. *Specific guidance from the Department of Education regarding Path Forward Programs of Distance Education is forthcoming.*

**Q8: Will school districts have the flexibility to make calendar adjustments as needed to implement different approaches to socially distant instruction (e.g., rotating cohorts of students, blended instruction, etc.)?**

**A:** Emergency Directive 005, Section 11 delegated the Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to allow county school districts and charter schools to modify existing calendars and granted the Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to approve calendars that fail to comply with the provisions of NAC 387.120 or NAC 387.125. The Nevada Department of Education will continue its work with district/school leaders to ensure that flexibility is created where necessary for districts/schools to carry out safe, efficient, and equitable reopening plans, which may include updated guidance on school calendars.

*The following questions and answers are copied from the Summer Learning and Activity Guidance dated June 9, 2020. All answers below apply both to summer learning and activities as well as 2020-21 school year reopening until such a time as updated public health guidance is provided by the Nevada State Occupational Safety and Health Association (NV OSHA), the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel (LEAP), and/or the Centers for Disease Control.*

Social Distancing, Gatherings, and Hygiene

**Q9: Do district/school employees have to wear face coverings? Do students?**

**A:** Phase One & Two guidelines indicate that all employers shall require employees who interact with the public to wear face coverings to the maximum extent practicable. This applies to district/school employees who are interacting in-person with students, parents/guardians, and community members. Students and school visitors are strongly recommended, but not required, to wear face masks in public.

**Q10: Phase Two guidelines indicate that establishments may operate at 50% maximum capacity. Does that mean we can host a gathering in a large space that includes more than 50 people?**

**A:** No. The 50-person limitation on gatherings trumps all other Phase Two guidelines and protocols; even if you have a room at your school site that could hold 100 people at 50% capacity, you may only have 50 people gathered in a single space at a time. For graduation ceremonies at larger schools, this may entail holding multiple small ceremonies so parents/guardians can attend.

**Q11: Phase Two guidelines limit private and public gatherings to 50 or fewer people, unless individuals live in the same household. Does this mean that only 50 or fewer people can be on school grounds or in a school building at a time?**

**A:** In a school setting, limits on gatherings should apply to spaces/areas within school facilities, rather than an entire school site. For example, no more than 50 individuals should be in a single office suite, classroom, gymnasium, or other confined space at a single time, and social distancing protocols should be strictly followed. If more than one group is using a shared space that is large enough to allow for

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students in all groups and their respective learning spaces to be six feet apart, then multiple groups of individuals can be in a space together. However, each group must be separated from the other by at least 30 feet and the total number of individuals must not exceed 50.

When more than 50 people are gathering on a school site for different purposes, plans should be put in place to minimize crowding in hallways or restrooms, gathering places (e.g., cafeterias, conference rooms) should be closed to the extent practicable, and individuals should be instructed to use specific exits and entrances so screening and cleaning protocols can be implemented. One-way hallways may be implemented to organize flow and maintain social distancing.

### **Q12: Can more than 50 people be gathered for the purposes of a socially distant athletics training session or practice?**

**A:** Please refer to the NIAA guidelines for Phase Two and Phase Three recommendations.

### **Q13: Can districts/schools implement requirements that are stricter than what is included in this guidance?**

**A:** As written in LEAP guidance, local entities can impose stricter requirements than the statewide standards.

### **Q14: What do we do if a student, staff, or community member tests positive for COVID-19 or has in contact with someone who has tested positive?**

**A:** Consult with local public health officials and refer to [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) guidance](#) on quarantine and isolation, CDC [Considerations for Schools](#), CDC [Considerations for School Closure](#), and [CDC FAQs for Administrators](#).

## School Visitors / Community Partners

### **Q15: Are parents/guardians allowed on school campuses for school registration, meetings, etc.?**

**A:** Under Directive 022, districts/schools may open school facilities to parents/guardians. Local governing bodies and district/school leaders may wish to set local policies and protocols regarding the circumstances under which parents/guardians and other community members may use school facilities, if at all.

### **Q16: Can partner organizations use district/school sites and, if so, for what purposes?**

**A:** Districts/schools may decide the extent to which the use of district/school grounds by partner organizations, external entities, and community members is practicable/allowable. Districts/schools should ensure all guidelines regarding maximum capacity of spaces, social distancing, and cleaning/hygiene are followed in such cases.

## Travel

### **Q17: Are district/school employees and students allowed to travel within Nevada for school/work-related purposes?**

**A:** Yes. When planning travel, districts/schools should take into consideration the risks of staff and students spending extended periods of time in confined spaces between destinations. All social distancing protocols should be followed.

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### **Q18: Are district/school employees and students allowed to travel outside of Nevada for school/work-related purposes?**

**A:** Phase One guidelines direct Nevadans to avoid non-essential travel and adhere to self-quarantine and monitor health for 14 days after arriving or returning to Nevada. School- and district-sponsored out-of-state travel should be suspended until further notice. You may also wish to refer to the [May 29 travel advisory](#) issued by the Governor as well as [CDC guidance](#).

### **Q19: Are Nevada districts/schools allowed to host events with districts/schools from other states?**

**A:** As of the [travel advisory](#) released on May 29, 2020, Nevada continues to strongly discourage those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not yet recovered, those who have been presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19, and those who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms from traveling to the State at this time. Additionally, Nevada recommends all travelers review [CDC travel guidelines](#), including restriction on travelers from certain foreign countries from entering the United States.