

QUICK GUIDE

(CLICK HEADING TO GO DIRECTLY TO PAGE)

INTRODUCTION

ALIGNING VISION AND DIRECTION

ASSESSING NEEDS AND EXECUTING A PLAN

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

INSTRUCTIONAL

OPERATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS, STAKEHOLDER, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

OTHER PLANNING RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This document was created by the Office of School Operations for the purpose of providing a planning framework for considerations and resources to network school FLT's as they respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in their school countries and communities. The assumptions are based upon current trends internationally and US school district research. Each school must follow guidelines that are safe and consistent with their country's overall COVID-19 health response, as issued by the ministry of education in their city and/or country. "Contextualization and continuous adaptation are necessary in order to respond to local conditions and meet each child's learning, health and safety needs." **UNICEF's Framework for Reopening Schools**

HOW TO USE THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Our Network school FLT's may use all or parts of this framework to suit their individual context and community needs in planning with their school teams for the 2020–21 school year. Schools are encouraged to communicate with and strive for transparency with their stakeholders. Sharing your planning with sister schools will maximize stewardship and support of each other.

THE DIRECTOR, THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS, AND OUR NETWORK MISSION

Network school directors are responsible for leading their schools in instructional leadership, resource management, advancement leadership, spiritual tone, and community. Directors will call upon all the school's leadership and staff in order to execute the opening and operation of our schools during these challenging days. It is the Office of School Operation's intent to provide a synthesis of data and best practices to help schools make decisions and set up a plan. We are committed to pray and support our schools as we look to the 2020–21 school year. We remain committed to the NICS Mission statement and *Standards of Best Practice*.

The mission of NICS is to establish a worldwide network of international Christian schools staffed by qualified Christian educators, instilling in each student a Biblical worldview in an environment of academic excellence and respect for people of all cultures and religions.

STANDARDS OF BEST PRACTICE

In the Fall of 2014, NICS school leaders and the Office of School Operations embarked upon a collaborative process to define academic and spiritual standards of excellence for network schools. In the fall of 2016, that process culminated in the development of a set of sixteen standards of best practice leaders agreed should be pursued by all NICS schools. A similar set was approved for Oasis schools.

Standards of Best Practice (SBP) are indicated throughout the *Considerations for Reopening Network Schools: A Planning Framework* document. We believe leadership teams will attain new levels of competency as they address the unique challenges of the coming school year. With that in mind, Field Leadership Teams (FLT's) will be responsible for self-assessing the following SBP Focus Standards for school year 2020-21:

- SBP #7 Strong instructional leaders
- SBP #3 Highly effective teachers
- SBP # 9 Leaders, teachers, parents, and students collaborate to meet student learning needs.
- SBP # 11 NICS only schools- Mission-minded faculty and staff that are committed to salvation and spiritual formation/discipleship of students
- SBP #10 Oasis only schools- Spiritually mature and mission-minded faculty and staff

ALIGNING VISION AND DIRECTION

VISION

Throughout the 2020–21 school year, network schools are healthy and connected, and all students are provided maximum opportunities to learn.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- maintaining continuity of instruction
- keeping students and staff safe and healthy
- insuring access and equity for all students
- communicating with stakeholders such as staff, parents, students, and community
- ensuring flexibility to meet the needs of students while maintaining fiscal solvency

ASSESSING NEEDS AND EXECUTING A PLAN

Timing Considerations- For schools without instructions and policies from local or country school officials regarding opening in a traditional manner, directors and FLTs may review the following considerations as options for a traditional instructional plan:

TIMELINES

- Phasing- consider bringing students back to school incrementally by grade or divisional levels.
- Postponing some daily activities until feasible.
- Elementary- special classes teachers move, not students; postpone group settings such as assemblies, playground, lunchroom eating, PE, etc., and bring back in phases
- Secondary- teachers move to classrooms, not students; limit movement in hallways, lunchroom, and break times, after school activities

SCHEDULING

- Stagger school arrival and departure times by division to minimize the number of students arriving in the building at the same time.
- Parent and student orientations, sports, clubs, and other activities may need to be limited, postponed, or canceled.
- Altering bell schedules to minimize the number of students in the hallways.
- Multiple lunch, break, and recess periods.
- Schedule handwashing at arrival, before and after eating, and other intervals.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS

To ensure continuity of learning, FLT's (and teachers) can consider which instructional models work best to meet student needs when planning for the 2020–21 school year. The following models are a few examples of potential instructional options:

Traditional Instruction- Students are required to be physically present in school with some

- modifications in schedules and appropriate social distancing
- daily screening protocols
- arrival and departure time adjustments

Also-

- Consider keeping students static and moving teachers to limit interactions.
- Create a plan for supervising students and adjusting duties for staff who cannot return to the building for various reasons.
- Limit student movement and restrict gatherings in buildings to achieve social distancing.
- Consider special accommodations for staff and students who are at higher risk.

Hybrid Instruction- combines face-to-face instruction with virtual/distance learning online.

Option 1

- Limits the number of students on campus to fifty percent of normal.
- Divide all classes into two equal groups: One group attends school on Mondays and Wednesdays; another group on Tuesdays and Thursdays, all using social distancing within the classroom and use of technology on home days. Fridays are used as a school disinfectant day and a time for teachers to plan and assess student progress.

Option 2

- Also limits the number of students on campus to fifty percent of normal.
- Half of the students attend school Monday through Thursday one week; the other half of the student body attends the next week, Monday through Thursday. This allows for restricted interactions and observation of outbreaks within two distinct groups. Fridays are used as a school disinfectant day and a time for teachers to plan and assess student progress.

Option 3

- Limits the number of students on campus to twenty percent of normal.
- All classes are divided into five equal groups: one for each day of the week.
- All teachers provide each group with one day of direct instruction and support, and four days of assignments/virtual options to complete at home.
- Or divide classes by twenty-five percent and teach four days, use Fridays for teachers to provide individual or small-group support by appointment or to prepare instruction video and projects (packets) for the next week.

Option 4

- Offer traditional instruction but allow families to opt out of face-to-face/traditional if their child is a health risk or parent has concern about their student's return to class. This provides a natural reduction in the number of students in the building. Homebound students would do prepared work, flipped, or watch via live stream class presentations in real time.

Option 5

- Have teachers move from class to class and students remain in the classroom to minimize broad interaction and to maintain control of social distancing. Use block scheduling for secondary students to minimize interactions and keep social distancing. Decisions about PE (outside versus in gym), vocal music, and other specialties/electives will need to be considered.

Understanding Hybrid School Models

Virtual/Distance Learning- Uses a variety of online options:

Learning Management System (LMS), technology platforms, and asynchronous instruction (such as recording a webcast). Assess if all students have access to appropriate devices.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

INSTRUCTIONAL: WHAT STUDENTS MUST ACHIEVE IN 2020–21

Begin planning by defining what students must achieve in 2020–21, and then consider how you will achieve the following:

MAINTAIN CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

Assessment

- Determine which standards were taught and which were not taught in school year 2019–2020 for all students and grade levels/courses. **Articulating a Plan for Interrupted Learning**
- Decide which assessments are necessary to determine retention and current mastery levels. Implement a diagnostic screener for all students to assess grade-level readiness. Be aware that **NWEA research** suggests as much as a sixty-percent learning loss may have occurred in Math during school year 2019–2020.
3 Principles for Assessment During Instructional Recovery and Beyond

Planning for Instruction

- Once student retention and mastery have been assessed, prioritize your school's essential learning targets for individual students and grade levels/courses for 2020–21. Essential learning targets should accommodate learning loss and new learning.
- Develop a pacing guide to accommodate 2020–21 essential learning targets. **Kick-Start Fall Planning**
- Determine how you will monitor progress to assure grade-level expectations will be met (so students will be prepared for 2021–2022).
- Develop channels for communication and engagement with stakeholders (low-level burden feedback channels).
- Determine how you will adapt to meet emerging needs.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

Address Staff Needs

- Address the social/emotional/spiritual needs of leaders, teachers, and staff. **How to support teachers' emotional needs right now, ACSI resources, The Psychology of Crisis, and Quarantine Soul Care.**
- Determine how satisfied teachers and staff were with the instructional support provided to them during the second semester. Take a "needs" assessment. Provide professional development and support.
- Determine what technology is consistently available to all teachers at home and at school, to see if it can adequately support online teaching and learning, or what must be done to ensure that all teachers have the resources they need to be successful. (See Technology and Learning Management Systems for additional information.)
- Provide targeted professional development and ongoing support relating to instructional technology, and your school's learning management systems and online learning platforms. (See Technology and Learning Management Systems for additional information.)
- Determine what additional training and support is needed for new leaders, teachers, and staff.
- Prioritize and communicate new actions and behaviors required of leaders, teachers, and staff. Determine how will you empower and develop them to meet the emerging demands of their roles, and what specific expectations you have for teachers working traditionally and in hybrid and virtual environments.
- Provide opportunities (time and space) for leaders, teachers, and staff to collaborate on student learning needs.
- Train/remind staff regarding privacy protection of students and staff.

Address Students Needs

- Address the social/emotional/spiritual needs of students. **Social Emotional Learning and ACSI resources**
- Determine how satisfied students and parents were with the instructional support provided to them during the second semester. Consider taking a "needs" assessment.
- Create a plan to provide students with expanded learning opportunities and progress monitoring to support grade-level achievement.
- Collaborate with stakeholders (students, parents) to develop the best channels for communication and engagement (low-level burden feedback channels).

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

- Know what technology is consistently available to individual students at home. Determine if it can adequately support online teaching and learning. Determine what needs to happen to ensure that all students have the resources they need to be successful.
(See Technology and Learning Management Systems for additional information.)
- Provide training and ongoing support for students and parents relating to instructional technology, and your school's learning management systems and online learning platforms.
(See Technology and Learning Management Systems for additional information.)
- Determine what additional training and support is needed for new students and parents/guardians.
- Explore instructional options if online learning is not readily available.
- Review grading policies. (NICS/Oasis School Policies & Administrative Guidelines 2.8.7.1: "The Director of Academic Development must approve any changes to any school's graduation requirements.")
- Examine student attendance trends. Use data to inform and prioritize strategies to meet students' needs.
- Services to special populations
 - Have IEP teams review and update Individualized Education Plans for special education students.
COVID-19 and Special Education
 - Have ELL teams review and update English Language Learner policies and procedures to accommodate blended and distance learning. **Coronavirus: ELL and Multilingual Resources for Schools**
- Review and prioritize school supply lists and other required materials.



TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

Determine What Other School Programs Might Need to be Adjusted to Support Students in 2020–21

- community service requirements
- graduation requirements (NICS/Oasis School Policies & Administrative Guidelines 2.8.7.1: “The Director of Academic Development must approve any changes to any school’s graduation requirements.”)
- guidance
- college and career
- Advanced Placement courses, etc.
- child protection **Network Child Safety from Jesse Newman**
- health and safety

Recommit to Spiritual Formation for Faculty and Staff

- Find meaningful ways to engage leaders, teachers, and students in ongoing discipleship and Kingdom building.
- School activities such as chapel, service/outreach, and community engagement should be prioritized as feasible.
- Consider a spiritual formation director or chaplain to oversee spiritual formation support.
- Teachers should prioritize biblical integration/illumination and take advantage of unplanned opportunities to make connections between subject matter and spiritual truths.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

OPERATIONS

FACILITIES

- Barriers- consider the installation of physical barriers/Plexiglas in high-traffic reception areas, workspaces, cafeterias, etc., where the environment does not allow for easy social distancing.
- Object placement- rearrange furniture, prohibit use, or restructure areas to inhibit social gatherings and or difficulties in keeping areas sanitized.
- Floor markers for spacing.
- PPE (Professional Protection Equipment)- availability to staff.
- Supplies- disinfectant, wipes, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels for every classroom and space.
- Identify and schedule frequent disinfection of high-touch surfaces.
- All hands on deck to help in cleaning and disinfecting at appropriate times. Provide training for this.
- Play structures, library books, science equipment, computers, manipulatives, etc., restricted and wiped down.
- Drinking fountain usage (some schools and churches are turning them off, as they could be liability issues).
- Path of travel in hallways and entrances.
- Appropriate signage.

BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- Decrease in revenues, changes in enrollment, use of resources. Determine if there are places to reduce expenditures, and if there is a need for local hires.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

HUMAN RESOURCES

(See Address Staff Needs under Considerations for Reopening: Instructional.)

- Mandated quarantine- Determine what your staff's expectations are on compensation.
- If operating in a hybrid or virtual learning environment, determine if there are other normal benefits that will be forfeited, such as lunch or transportation to the school.
- If staff is in the country, and they are not required to quarantine, determine if they are expected to be on campus all or some of the normal working hours.
- Determine staff considerations for expatriates unable to arrive in the country, as well as expectations about meetings, planning, training, instructional modes, assessment of students, student safety, and time differences.
- Local staff- determine if local laws allow for a decrease of teacher aides etc., including transportation, cleaning, and food service staff, who are not needed if teaching is done online.
- Nutrition services
- Transportation

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

COMMUNICATIONS, STAKEHOLDER, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure effective communication systems.
- Overcommunicate. Given the heightened importance of the parents' role in students' success and for staff to be in the know there cannot be too much communication or too much reinforcement of key information.
- Prioritize and communicate new actions and behaviors required of leaders, teachers, and staff. Determine how you will empower and develop each group to meet the emerging demands of their roles.
- Determine specific expectations you have for teachers working traditionally, and/or in hybrid and virtual environments.
- Prioritize and communicate new actions and behaviors required of students and parents.
- Determine specific expectations you have for students and parents learning in traditional, hybrid, and/or virtual environments.
- Consider forming a communications task force to collect regular feedback from teachers, students, and parents. "Good decision-making is dependent on good information....When lacking certainty, seek clarity." –Dr. Erin Wilcox, ACSI.
- Consider using the following:
 - Parent/student survey- assessment of instructional program.
 - Letters and emails- timeliness, review, and approvals.
 - Recorded messages.
 - Virtual home visits.
 - Web sites- updating plan.
 - SIS (School Information Systems)- updates and oversight.
 - Clear signage- infographics.
 - A schedule for frequency in communicating, templates, theme-branding of type of information.
Aim for four to seventy-two-hour advance notice of changes.
 - FAQ for all key communicators- determine who will develop and share.
 - Engaging other stakeholders.
 - Consider a task force with key parents/Parent Teacher Organization members.
 - Survey and published results.
 - Community partnerships.
 - Other key systems and supports.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

- **Parent/Guardian Communication**

- Schools must set protocols and processes for managing information to various stakeholders. To ease parental fears, proactively share data and factual information such as specific procedures for dropping off and picking up students, checking temperatures, and the process of sending a student home if they exhibit symptoms, long before school starts.
- Continue to develop communications in the event of a staff member or student exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- Educate parents on the use of the virtual platforms and technology, i.e. information available on the website.
- Determine who will be the point of contact for parents/guardians. For example, principals, lead teachers.
- Share clearly with parents/guardians school expectations for class/coursework, attendance, and participation online, including how students will be assessed.
- Spell out for parents/guardians expectations regarding student safety online and teacher interactions.
- Share specifically about the school's handbook policy regarding payment of fees before school starts to alleviate misunderstanding of payment expectations.

- **Staff Communication**

- It is imperative that there be clear communication with all staff concerning expectations for online screen time, feedback to students and parents, staff participation, grading/assessment procedures, and child safety procedures. Also regarding attendance/participation in staff meetings and communication streams with teams and administration. Give careful attention to communicate with staff not able to arrive in country, regarding quarantine and arrival and visa issues.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Seek guidance from public health.
- Determine if there will be health checks for staff.
- Determine if staff will be expected to help in the enforcement of policies and in assisting in the cleaning of the facility, and if so, determine who will communicate and provide training.
- Illness prevention procedure and protocols.
- **Infection control practices**
 - social distancing, etc.
 - scheduled handwashing
 - face covering
 - staff personal equipment (PPE)
- Activities protocols.
- **Cleaning practices and schedules.**
 - common spaces, high frequency areas
 - classrooms
 - offices
 - meal preparation
- Daily entry screening- Consider using a single entry point and discuss how to handle visitors.
- Health office practices- Develop a plan for handling a staff or student with symptoms, i.e. temperature, isolation, student and protocols, tracing.
- **Suggested supplies.**
 - soap
 - paper products
 - disinfectant wipes and solutions
 - gloves
 - masks
 - hand sanitizers
 - touch-free hand sanitizer stations
 - no-touch thermometers
 - Plexiglas for high traffic areas

TO CONSIDER BEFORE OPENING

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

- **STUDENT/PARENT**

(See items under Determine What Other School Programs Might Need to be Adjusted to Support Students in 2020–21.)

- **DETERMINE EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF TO PROVIDE THESE SERVICES TO STUDENTS.**

- staff-led mentoring or discipleship groups if hybrid or online
- school-based mental health services
- family engagement and support practices

- **STAFF MEMBERS**

(See items under Recommit to Spiritual Formation for Faculty and Staff.)

- Address and clarify Member Care responsibilities.
- Consider devotional and worship opportunities for staff.
- Determine the source of support of staff's mental health (member care, human resources).
- Maintain student and staff awards and traditions.
- Other key systems and supports.

TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- Determine which grades will use the Learning Management System (LMS).
- Determine specific expectations you have for leaders, teachers, students, and parents.
- Determine how you will provide ongoing professional development and assistance to teachers and staff, and how you will support students and parents.
- For consistency, consider mandating that the same platforms be used across the entire school to ensure effective training and consistent implementation.
- Create an appealing online learning hub that can be accessed from your school's website. Your school's online learning hub can be used for marketing purposes in addition to housing the school's learning platform. **Digitally communicating your school's value through your website**
- Begin compiling a video library of YouTube how-to videos to share with teachers, students, parents.
- **Online learning resources previously presented to leaders and FLTs (May 13, 2020):**
 - **NICS/Oasis Depository for Online Learning Resources**
 - **Critical Steps to Implement Digital Learning**
 - **Effective Best Practices in Digital Learning**
 - **Digital Learning Best Practices Checklist**
 - **Guiding Questions for Reviewing Your Schools Learning Management System**
 - **ICS Singapore Online Learning Hub (example)**
 - **Guiding Questions for Reviewing Your Schools Learning Management System**

OTHER PLANNING RESOURCES

- **Framework for reopening schools, June 2020, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.**
- **Los Angeles County Schools: A Planning Framework - 2020-2 School Year**
- **Guidelines For Reopening Schools - AASA**
- **Scheduling the COVID-19 School Year**
- **Preventing A Lost School Year**
- **Coronavirus Resources for Schools**
- **COVID19_Emergency-Planning-Guides**
- **Potential EPP, Emergency Preparation Plan Appendix "M" – Pandemic Response**

THE LORD HIMSELF
GOES BEFORE YOU AND WILL BE WITH YOU;
HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU
NOR FORSAKE YOU.

DO NOT BE AFRAID;
DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED.

DEUTERONOMY 34:1

