



COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools: Intermittent School Closures

June 15, 2020

As schools prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, they should prepare for intermittent school closures. This planning looks beyond the formal use of the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program to allow instruction to continue through remote means. Planning for school closure also must include plans to remain at a constant state of readiness for a sudden school closure.

Schools and districts should remain vigilant in preparing for sudden intermittent closures or rapid transitions to extended periods of remote learning. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) encourages schools and districts to build and communicate transition plans and maintain a constant state of readiness throughout the school year. This may involve changes to the way students store materials, the types of materials students take home daily and considerations for blended learning in lesson planning.

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Types of Intermittent Closures

As the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) continues to monitor the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the next school year, it is important to remember that there could be closures of varying lengths and for varying reasons. In many cases, the length of the closure and the accessibility that teachers have to their students can affect the transition planning your district should consider:

- Short-term Closures (1-2 days): These are the more traditional uses of NTI. In the case of COVID-19, this would be a closure to facilitate cleaning or social distancing efforts.



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- Mid-term Closures (3-10 days): These closures may take on elements of the traditional use of NTI but also contain elements found in Long-Term Closures like those experienced in the spring of 2020.
- Long-Term Closures (11+ days): These closures look most like the closure experienced in the spring of 2020 and probably include the most restrictions related to public health guidelines, which will affect structures like collection of student work, feeding programs and distribution of student technology.

Readiness for School Closures: Common Elements

It is crucial that schools remain prepared for all school closures, regardless of the length of the closure. It is highly recommended that your Readiness for School Closure Plan have certain elements that are the same, regardless of the length of closure:

- Integrated Instructional Design
In order to keep instructional continuity during closures, all instruction should be designed using available technology platforms, especially learning management systems (i.e. Google Classroom, Canvas, Class Dojo). Designing all instruction in a tech-enabled way makes transitions extremely smooth. Tech-enabled instruction works just as well during in-person instructional delivery and can easily be modified for offline (paper) instructional delivery. In addition, if all students receive their in-person instruction using tech-enabled design, students will not be challenged with new methods of instructional design during closure.
- Use of School-Owned Technology
It is highly recommended that if students have been assigned district-owned digital devices, they take those home with them every night in order to avoid being without them due to a sudden closure. If the district-owned devices are not assigned, it is recommended that the district plan include the process for swift deployment of those devices.
- Limited Storage of Instructional Materials
Due to the sudden nature of intermittent closures, it is highly recommended that students take instructional materials (i.e. books, other materials) home in the evenings.

Readiness for School Closures: Variable Elements

There also will need to be elements of your Readiness for School Closure Plan that might vary based on the length of the school closure, such as use of NTI, submission of work and food service:



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Short-term Closures (1-2 days)

- NTI
If the district desires, a plan for short-term closure could simply be to close school and not take advantage of NTI. If NTI is used, the district should have a plan for continuation of learning.
- Submission of Work
When the district has a short-term intermittent closure, student work and calculation of participation can be done when students return to school.
- Food Service
The district's plan for food services during a short-term closure could be to not provide meals or to follow feeding plans implemented in the spring of 2020.

Mid-term Closures (3-10 days)

- NTI
It is recommended that if your closure lasts 3 days or longer, you should implement NTI.
- Submission of Work
When the district has a mid-term intermittent closure, student work and calculation of participation can still be done when students return to school.
- Food Service
The district's plan for food services during a mid-term closure could be to not provide meals or to follow feeding plans implemented in the spring of 2020.

Long-term Closures (11+ days) (Presumes there will be public health restrictions)

- NTI
It is recommended that if your closure last 3 days or longer, you should implement NTI.
- Submission of Work
When the district has long-term intermittent closures, student work and calculation of participation needs to be done digitally for those with digital access as it occurs. The district should have an identified process for material collection for offline (paper) on at least a weekly basis.
- Food Service
It is recommended that the district's plan for food services during a long-term closure would be to follow feeding plans using similar as was done in the spring of 2020.



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Additional Considerations

- Deployment of Classified Staff
 - Could be the same for all closures or different based on district plan.
- Location of All Staff
 - Could be the same for all closures or different based on district plan.
- Review vs. New Content
 - Your Readiness for School Closure Plans also should address expectations about when new content could be introduced.

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