

Off-Reservation Boarding Schools, On-Reservation School Dormitories, and Peripheral Dormitories

JULY 14, 2020

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION



Consultation Protocol

- Please mute your phones.
- To conserve bandwidth during this presentation, please turn off your video.
- The moderator will call on you for comments. Please state your full name and Tribal/organizational affiliation when called upon.
- All participants will be placed on mute while the presentation is being provided.
- A copy of the presentation may be found on the COVID-19 School Reopening webpage, <https://www.bia.gov/covid-19/school-reopening>
- Comments typed in the chat box need to be to “everyone.” Please do not send private comments because they may not be recorded by the moderator and court reporter.
- If time allows, we will address comments in the chat box. Please put your name and Tribal/organizational affiliation in the chat box.
- This session is for engaging BIE stakeholders and is closed to the press and media.

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Presenters

Welcome and Introductions

Mark Cruz, Deputy Assistant
Secretary for Policy and Economic
Development – Indian Affairs
Tony L. Dearman, BIE Director

Presenters

Lora Braucher, Bureau Operated
Schools Education Program
Administrator
Randall Joe, Education Program
Specialist (Residential Life)

Purpose of Consultation

- ▶ The BIE is conducting this consultation to obtain oral and written comments regarding the reopening of BIE Residential Schools and Programs (which includes Off-Reservation Boarding Schools, On-Reservation School Dormitories, and Peripheral Dormitories) for school year 2020-2021 to strengthen BIE support to its students and local staff.
- ▶ Consultation is intended to ensure BIE is meeting the educational needs of students, schools, and tribal communities to provide a safe environment for the continuation of educational needs of the students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- ▶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the approaching start of the 2020-2021 school year, BIE provided an expedited notification period of 15 days instead of the usual 30-day notification period.
- ▶ Written comments may be received regarding residential facilities through 11:59pm EST on July 29, 2020.

25 CFR § 36.3 - Definitions

- ▶ **Dormitory:** A facility which provides students boarding and lodging on a temporary residential basis for the purpose of attending a Bureau-operated or Indian-controlled contract or public school.
 - ▶ **Off-Reservation Boarding School**
 - ▶ **On-Reservation School Dormitory**
- ▶ **Peripheral Dormitory:** A facility which provides students boarding and lodging during the school year for the purpose of attending a public school.

Local Individual Reopening Plans

- ▶ School administrators are responsible for the development of their individual reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year with approval from the respective BIE Education Program Administrator (EPA).
- ▶ School administrators should include the components and recommendations outlined in the BIE Draft School Reopening Plan that provides guidance for school year 2020-2021.
- ▶ EPAs hold the authority to reopen and/or close school sites but the decision should be made in consultation with the respective BIE Associate Deputy Directors (ADDs), school leadership, Tribal leadership, local Public Health Officials and Local Incident Commands, if applicable.

Conditions for BIE Residential Facilities

- ▶ In all stages and phases of a pandemic, residential facilities must consider CDC, Tribal, local, state, and public health guidelines.
- ▶ There is no one-size-fits-all plan that will work for every facility as all BIE sites have differing needs to address local conditions.
- ▶ Each site serves a unique school setting, so this is a time to utilize innovation and customization in services to support the needs of individual students and schools.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ The more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. (CDC guiding principle).
- ▶ Health Screening, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and how to respond to student and staff presenting COVID-19 symptoms.
- ▶ Facility cleaning practices and location of dormitories/boarding per CDC guidelines and staff capacity.
- ▶ Quarantine and/or isolation: Location, length of time, communication to family and staff, educational support and other related support as needed.
- ▶ Procedures for handling a positive COVID-19 case for student, staff, or visitors.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ Use or non-use of common areas to support social distancing.
- ▶ Staggering of restroom use and showers.
- ▶ Reduction of students in the residential facilities to allow for single room occupancy.
- ▶ Wrap-around support systems to support mental and behavioral health.
- ▶ Student dining on evenings and weekends.
- ▶ Support for high-risk students.
- ▶ Transportation:
 - ▶ To and from home.
 - ▶ To and from the school or dormitory.
 - ▶ To and from activities, medical appointments, etc.
 - ▶ Consider revisiting bus transportation routes to adhere to CDC social distancing requirements (more runs, different routes, fewer students on buses at any given time).
- ▶ Consider revising and updating safety procedures for transporting sick students to health officials.
- ▶ Consider revising the re-admittance policy into residential setting in collaboration with the public school.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ Staffing
 - ▶ Dormitories are staffed for evenings/nights (and weekends for ORBS) resulting in a potential lack of supervision for students during daytime school hours, which could prohibit alternating class schedules for distancing.
 - ▶ Lack of adequate, highly qualified medical staff (in case of suspected COVID-19 cases or need for quarantine).
 - ▶ Lack of designated staff to enforce social distancing and PPE practices.
 - ▶ Staff who may be at a high-risk.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ Funding
 - ▶ Decreased enrollment or dormitory closures may negatively affect the three-year rolling average resulting in future decreased funding.
 - ▶ Consider providing residential programs with a waiver or providing extra funding to dormitories due to lower student numbers.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ Facilities
 - ▶ Limited space for safe, designated areas to quarantine/isolate ill students.
 - ▶ Most dormitories have shared restrooms/showers.
 - ▶ Common, shared living spaces (living/common areas, kitchen, computer labs, etc.).
 - ▶ Sanitizing of dorms and restrooms: each dorm room and common areas should be cleaned multiple times throughout the day, evening and weekends.
 - ▶ Does staffing needed to accomplish cleaning support currently exist and are janitors/maintenance staff prepared to assist.

Reopening Considerations

- ▶ Visitors & Activities
 - ▶ Possible “no visitors allowed” or check out to reduce risk of exposure.
 - ▶ Possible “no off-campus activities” for students to reduce risk of exposure.
 - ▶ Significantly limited on-campus activities due to social distancing.
- ▶ Student Life
 - ▶ Compliance of students after school/on weekends.
 - ▶ PPE Compliance.
 - ▶ Social Distancing.
 - ▶ Even with reduced number of students in the dorms, social distancing may not be enforced 24/7 (and on weekends for ORBS) due to staffing. Facilities should plan for additional staff support, as practicable.
- ▶ Mental well-being of students
 - ▶ Expectations of social distancing during non-classroom time could negatively

Off-Reservation Boarding School Considerations

- ▶ Transportation across the United States (including COVID-19 hotspots).
 - ▶ Utilize modes of transportation that diminish potential risk of exposure.
 - ▶ No assurance that student traveling will follow CDC travel guidance, so provide instructions ahead of time to diminish risk.
- ▶ Possible issues regarding students traveling home if they contract the virus.
- ▶ Staff capacity issues may hinder ability to support ill student travel needs.
 - ▶ Facilities needed to isolate students who test positive for COVID-19.
 - ▶ Facilities needed to quarantine students who were potentially exposed to COVID-19.

Peripheral Dormitories & On-Reservation School Dormitories Considerations

- ▶ Transportation to school site (Peripheral Dormitories).
- ▶ Transportation to and from home.
- ▶ Transportation to and from activities.
- ▶ Learning plan of school student is enrolled:
 - ▶ On-site, distance learning or a hybrid model for the public and on-reservation schools will impact the delivery of the residential services.

General Questions to Consider

- ▶ What will the reopening communication process be to parents and schools from the residential program?
- ▶ Will every school/residential program select the best mask to be worn, so that there is a uniform CDC-approved mask?
 - ▶ Consider that adequate funding is set aside for CDC-recommended cloth/disposal masks.
- ▶ Will residential student numbers change due to CDC social distancing guidelines?
- ▶ Will the number of students allowed in the residential program become a consideration due to facility size?
- ▶ Will residential programs be held accountable to the three-year rolling average, knowing that if a residential program adheres to the CDC social distancing guidelines student numbers may be reduced due to new facility capacity?

Questions Related to ORBS

- ▶ Do students have local education services outside of the ORBS?
- ▶ Will Tribes allow students to travel to ORBS?
- ▶ If a student tests positive for COVID-19, would they be allowed to return to the reservation/community?
- ▶ Should ORBS be open and available to all students during the current situation?
- ▶ Should ORBS reopen with a reduced enrollment with no students sharing rooms?
- ▶ Should ORBS remain open to local day students only?
- ▶ If students have connectivity and technology and the school has capacity to provide online learning, should ORBS reopen virtually?

Questions related to Peripheral Dormitories & On-Reservation School Dormitories

- ▶ Should Friday drop-offs and Sunday pick-ups be eliminated or revised to adhere to social distancing guidance since schools do not receive funding for those trips?
- ▶ Will students be quarantined at the dorm, transported home, or left at the hospital if sick?
 - ▶ This may also mean providing an alternate staffing schedule in case staff members must quarantine.
- ▶ Should the Peripheral and On-Reservation School Dormitories reopen during the current situation if the local school is not on a traditional schedule?
- ▶ If a student becomes ill, does the student return home to the reservation/community?

Resources

- ▶ **COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry --**
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- ▶ **COVID-19: Update on Progress Toward Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School – Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions --**
<https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/covid-19-update-on-progress-toward-safely-getting-back-to-work-and-back-to-school>
- ▶ **Supporting your child's mental health as they return to school during COVID-19**
-- <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>
- ▶ **Remarks by the President regarding Safely Reopening America's Schools --**
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-safely-reopening-americas-schools/>

Next steps and Timelines

- ▶ Oral comments received as part of the consultation sessions will be collected through a court reporter.
- ▶ Written comments must be received within 15 days on or before **July 29, 2020** or other date TBD upon approval to publish at **11:59 p.m. EST**.
- ▶ Send comments to consultation@bia.gov or Bureau of Indian Education, Juanita Mendoza, 1849 C Street NW MIB-3612, Washington, DC 20240.
- ▶ BIE will analyze all comments and determine how to utilize feedback to improve the current Plan to better support its schools.
- ▶ For further information, please contact: Juanita Mendoza, Special Assistant to the Director, Bureau of Indian Education; phone (202) 208-3559 or email Juanita.Mendoza@bie.edu