



TRIBAL CONSULTATION ON BIE DRAFT SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION (BIE)

Welcome and Introductions

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

Presenters

- Dr. Tamarah Pfeiffer, BIE Chief Academic Officer
- Clint J. Bowers, BIE Chief of Staff

PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

- The BIE is conducting consultation to obtain oral and written comments on the draft BIE School Reopening Plan for BIE-Operated Schools and recommendations for Tribally Controlled Schools for school year 2020-2021 to strengthen BIE support to its schools and local staff.
- Consultation is intended to ensure BIE is meeting the needs of its students, schools, and Tribal communities to provide a safe environment for the continuation of education 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. The same 15-day time period will be used to receive formal comments post consultation no later than 11:59pm EST on July 25, 2020

OVERVIEW OF PLAN

- BIE Draft School Reopening Plan: <https://www.bia.gov/covid-19/school-reopening>
- The Plan is high-level **guidance** document intended to support schools while allowing for local flexibility for school leaders to coordinate with their local, state, Tribal and public health officials.
- The Plan will:
 - Provide reopening directives to BIE-Operated Schools for developing individual school site reopening plans with adequate time before school year 2020-2021.
 - Provide reopening guidance to BIE-Funded Schools, including Tribally Controlled Schools, who may utilize the Plan's recommendations to support their individual school site reopening plans.
 - Serve as structural guidance for formal government-to-government Tribal consultation as well as separate engagement events with pertinent union organizations, such as the Federation of Indian Service Employees (FISE), and national organizations like the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

LOCAL REOPENING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- School administrators are responsible for the development of their individual reopening plans for school year 2020-2021 with approval from the respective BIE Education Program Administrator (EPA)
- School administrators should use the components and recommendations outlined in this Plan to develop their local reopening plans
- 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 (ADD), school leadership, Tribal leadership, local Public Health Officials and Local Incident Commands, if applicable.

CDC DECISION TREE FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Should you consider opening?

- ✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- ✓ Is the school ready to protect children and employees at **higher risk** for severe illness?
- ✓ Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

ANY
NO



ALL
YES

Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- ✓ Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible
- ✓ Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation
- ✓ Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
- ✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols

ANY
NO



ALL
YES

Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- ✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible
- ✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home
- ✓ Plan for if students or employees get sick
- ✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
- ✓ Monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices
- ✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area

ANY
NO



ALL
YES

OPEN AND MONITOR



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

PLAN TOPIC AREAS

- The Plan is divided into sections or topic areas, including:
 - Guidelines for school reopening;
 - Considerations for teachers and staff;
 - School building mitigation and cleaning;
 - Health screening; and
 - Social distancing and other safety protocols.
- The Plan is intended for implementation in BIE-Operated Schools and guidance for Tribally Controlled Schools as it incorporates best practices recommended by the CDC Decision Tree for Reopening Schools.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL REOPENING

- Any action taken to reopen a school should be done in coordination with a school's respective BIE EPA and should utilize guidance from pertinent local, state, and Tribal officials as well as local public health officials.
- In keeping with CDC guidance, school administrators should consider state, Tribal, local emergency orders, level of community transmission, the ability to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff and students, and other preventative measures for staff and students.
- Where states are open but local Indian Tribes served by the school requests a school site stay closed, school administrators should consult with local Indian Tribes and make a local determination.
- The decision to reopen a school should generally be made when local infection rates have slowed significantly and other parts of the local economy have reopened. This should be coordinated with the respective EPA and ADD for approval.
- School reopening should be informed by CDC School Decision Tools

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS

- What criteria will be used to determine how and when a school brings students, teachers, and staff back to campus?
- How do we ensure reopening is not done too early?
- What coordination needs to occur between the school and community when developing a reopening plan?
- How can EPAs assist schools with forming reopening teams to develop local schools reopening plans?
- What protocols are in place if the schools must reclose?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

- Which employees will be able or allowed to work from the school?
- What safety protocols will be in place and how will employees be trained in safety protocols, and how will they be enforced?
- Which employees will be allowed or required to work from their homes?
- What technology and access to connectivity will be available to staff to continue productivity if schools are 100 percent distance learning.
- Will teachers and staff receive training for use of new learning platforms or resources?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING MITIGATION AND CLEANING

- Implement and review daily protocols to ensure a safe and clean environment
- Ensure buildings are being cleaned throughout the day to reduce exposure
- Provide training to staff and have well-stocked cleaning and PPE supplies
- Create physical barriers to promote and practice social distancing (if desired)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HEALTH SCREENING

- Educate parents in the continuum of health screening so children are screened prior to going to school
- Train staff to follow CDC screening guidelines
- Practice regular screening of students, staff and others is critical to ensure people are healthy and not exhibiting signs of illness
- School leaders will need to utilize approved protocols and determine how and where screening takes place
- Reduce risk and isolate individuals with symptoms in a compassionate manner and in a safe environment

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- Staff members and students should exercise social distancing although not always possible in an indoor structured environment.
- Implement social distancing, hand washing and other safety protocols within a school facility to mitigate spread.
- Providing appropriate social distancing for the teachers, principals and school-based staff who are in the high-risk category for COVID-19
- Grouping students with staff for the purpose of instruction, meals, bus, physical education
- Adjust student transportation to meet social distancing requirements
- Use outdoor space to help meet social distancing needs in what context?

PLAN'S ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Transportation
- Vulnerable students, and staff
- Special Populations with IEP's and 504 plans
- School-based Health Services
- Residential Boarding Schools/Dormitories
- Post-Secondary
 - Haskell Indian Nations University
 - Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute
- Communications

BIE SCHOOL TASK FORCE SUPPORT FOR REOPENING

- The BIE Task Force includes ADDs and Division of Performance and Accountability representatives who will work with their field staff to support schools on their individual school reopening plans.
- Examples of Scenarios for Reopening

TASK FORCE REPRESENTATIVES

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QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

- What are your recommendations to improve the Plan?
- What areas need additional clarification?
- Is there information that should be included that was omitted?

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/>
- **All Hands on Deck: Initial Guidance Regarding Reopening School Buildings --**
<https://educatingthroughcrisis.org/meeting-students-and-families-needs/guidance-for-reopening-schools-covid/>
- **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>

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 25, 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
- For further information, contact: Juanita Mendoza, Special Assistant to the Director, Bureau of Indian Education; phone (202) 208-3559 or email Juanita.Mendoza@bie.edu