CHECKLIST DEVELOPED FROM THE 03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools

Generally

1. ☐ The leader or other designated authority is participating in Superintendent calls and is signed up for and reading all COVID-19 and Superintendent updates from MDE, including the important communication document which is currently updated daily, 03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools

2. ☐ The school has read the **Governor's emergency Executive Order 20-02** that is in place through March 27, 2020.

3. ☐ The school can answer the following questions:
- How will we support the mental health needs of students?
- What attendance policy will be implemented during distance learning?
- How will IEP needs be met?
- How will meal delivery or distribution happen?
- How will lessons be delivered to accommodate 504 plans?
- How will we accommodate translation and interpretation needs for our English learners?
- How will homeless students' needs be met?
- How will early learning and assessment happen?
- How will we regularly communicate with families during distance learning?
- How will we deliver progress reports?
- How will we factor in tribal considerations?
- How will we factor in broadband or internet access (or lack of it) for all of our students?
- How will we utilize partnerships to meet needs of vulnerable students?
- How are we making sure that staff needs are met?

4. ☐ The distance learning plan is for an extended period of time of at least 8 weeks of distance learning (in the event schools must deliver distance learning for an extended time period).

5. ☐ The school posted the distance learning plan to the school's website before March 30, 2020 and is keeping the school community informed as information is available and updated.

Distance Learning

The school ensures and verifies that the distance learning is provided in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students,

1. ☐ All students have access to appropriate educational materials, including technology.

2. ☐ All students receive daily interaction (two-way interaction) with their licensed teacher(s).

3. ☐ If using an online learning system, the school continues to support the unique learning and teaching needs including differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one support for students who need it.

4. ☐ Regardless of where the learning is happening, the school provides the supports identified on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or 504 Plan.

5. ☐ The school continues to follow the Individual Learning Plans for English Language Learners.

6. ☐ Training is provided to staff, students, and parents/guardians on implementation of the distance learning model and the district's expectations.

7. ☐ Programming options for school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, paraprofessionals, other school specialists and cultural liaisons are clear.

8. ☐ The school tracks the attendance of both students and staff.

9. ☐ The distance learning model in use is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

Care

1. ☐ During school closure of previously planned school days, the school provides on-site care to, at a minimum, enrolled students aged 12 and under who are children of emergency workers (healthcare, emergency responders for example- see MDE list) critical to the State's response to COVID-19.

2. ☐ The school provides transportation to and from the care program as they normally would to and from school.

3. ☐ The school handles the verification of students who receive care, which may include securing a letter from the employer or showing an employment badge.

4. ☐ The school provides care at no cost to families.

Nutrition

1. ☐ The school ensures meals are available to all students who need them during school closure.

2. ☐ The school took the opportunity to apply for one of the following options:

   o The school applied for a waiver to MDE to serve student meals under Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

   o The school applied for a waiver to MDE to serve student meals under Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

   The waivers can be backdated to March 16th, 2020- Any meals served as part of the school learning and distance learning process will be funded.

   The waiver and application is a two-step process:

   1. Waiver: An online request is required to demonstrate the intent to request the waiver to operate the SFSP/SSO in a non-congregate setting. Once a completed request is submitted, MDE staff will review and approve waiver requests and will communicate with the school through email.

   2. Application: The second step is the application update or submission in the CLiCS. This application allows for claims and reimbursement to be submitted under this waiver.

3. ☐ The school has read all MDE guidelines in the **Nutrition** section in the 03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools

4. ☐ All the students' nutritional needs are addressed including students with allergies and other food restrictions.

5. ☐ Food is marked appropriately for allergies and other food restrictions.

6. ☐ Multiple geographically located food distribution centers where necessary are established, keeping in mind that students are not allowed to eat inside the school.

7. ☐ All necessary personnel are stationed at food distribution sites to maximize student and staff safety and supervise the sites.

8. ☐ The school uses the most current guidelines to develop distribution strategies that will avoid large gatherings of people and make social distancing possible.

9. ☐ Up to two meals are provided each day (one breakfast, one lunch, or one snack in any combination distributed at once either via pick-up, drive-up or delivery).

10. ☐ Only parent/guardians/students themselves pick up food. Children do not need to be accompanied by an adult to receive food.

11. ☐ The school allows ample and reasonable amount of time for meal pick-up for each meal service, recognizing that families may be experiencing challenges during this time.

12. ☐ The school is using multiple modes of communication to inform students and families of available food service, including time, location, and method of distribution.

13. ☐ The school is considering multiple methods of distribution, such as drive up; walk up; satellite locations, such as libraries, churches, park districts, and youth centers; home delivery via bus routes; and other options.

14. ☐ A school staff member or designee will deliver meal(s) and/or materials to student homes of families who lack transportation or with medically fragile children if requested that food be delivered to their residence. Schools should initiate plans with families to make arrangements prior to delivery. For meals, both breakfast and lunch can be delivered at once.

15. ☐ The school has thoroughly reviewed the implementation options for consideration in the **Meals and/or Instructional Material Pick-up** section of the 03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools

Health

1. ☐ The school has thoroughly reviewed the information in the **Health and Wellness** section of the 03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools

2. ☐ The school is managing communication with children and families appropriately following guidelines from Talking to Children about COVID-19

3. ☐ The school provides a smooth continuity of services including school-linked mental health and other student supports.

4. ☐ The policy regarding Bullying and Harassment is communicated to help prevent bullying and harassment related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

5. ☐ Information about Mental Health Support Resources are available to families, students and staff and others working with the school.

Attendance and Truancy

1. ☐ The attendance and absence policy accommodates for the implementation of the distance learning model.

2. ☐ Clear expectations for attendance and truancy are communicated to students, staff and parents.

3. ☐ The school is coordinating with the county and exercising caution before starting any truancy process.

Special Education Services

1. ☐ The distance learning model includes equitable access to specialized instruction and related services for students with disabilities so that they have access to general education standards and continue to demonstrate progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals.

2. ☐ During the distance learning planning period (March 18-27, 2020), the school takes into account that SPED program student evaluations and IEP meetings deadlines are delayed for that time period.

3. ☐ There is a process to communicate with parents and guardians regarding their child's services, which should include discussion regarding amending IEP's to address how best to meet the student's needs in a flexible learning model, including direct specialized instruction, related services, and accommodations.

4. ☐ The school has identified IEP team members, and agencies and organizations that should be included in the communication, including contracted providers and non-public agencies (tele-related services can be used to address needs such as speech and language, and mental health services).

5. ☐ The school has reviewed the delivery of special education and related services, as well as general education curriculum, in the distance learning plan to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to distance learning.

- This includes children from birth through age 21.
- This will necessitate communication between the case manager, the general education teachers, the parent/guardian and related services providers to ensure that students with disabilities can be appropriately involved and make progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals.

- The school has addressed translation and interpreter needs for students and families when developing and providing instructional materials.
- The school has considered the use of hot spots and free internet services being offered by internet companies for the delivery of instruction and for due process procedures.
- The school has considered delivering instructional materials to students through the school bus transportation routes and is following the most current safe handling guidelines when delivering and/or collecting any materials.

6. ☐ The school continues to implement IEP's. OSEP's March 2020 technical assistance document response to Question A-5 provides that IEP teams may, but are not required to, include distance learning plans in a child's IEP that could be triggered and implemented in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak that requires the school's closure. IEPs may be amended without holding an IEP team meeting in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(4)(i). See the following for details: Special Education and COVID-19 Questions and Answers: Due Process

7. ☐ The school continues to hold IEP meetings to review IEP goals and services, and conduct evaluations and reevaluations. This could include virtual meetings and phone conferences.

8. ☐ The school has reviewed the memo from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs with questions and answers to federal special education issues related to school closure, district closure and services and programming for medically fragile children on IEPs and educational opportunities, such as distance learning.

Services for English Learners

1. ☐ All students have access to a reliable internet connection if needed for the distance learning plan

2. ☐ All communication with families is accessible to all families that may not speak English as a primary language

3. ☐ All students can access the distance learning taking into consideration the ability of all students to understand and produce complex academic language for assignments without typical scaffolds

4. ☐ The school is providing scaffolding methods that are available in a distance learning environment

5. ☐ Appropriately licensed ESL teachers are providing content instruction via distance learning

Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability

1. ☐ The school's distance learning plan specifies how it will satisfy the Federal requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, to support homelessness students throughout this crisis and promote their full participation in their education throughout the duration of the distance learning period

2. ☐ The school has reviewed and understands the legal requirements for districts to support homeless students in having full access to education, which remain in full force and effect.

3. ☐ The school has reviewed MDE's posted guidance for school districts on meeting these requirements, several technical assistance centers and associations also have guides for implementing these requirements, including the National Center on Homeless Education, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and SchoolHouse Connection.

4. ☐ The school has designated key staff who will coordinate homeless-specific responses.

5. ☐ The school is monitoring the evolving and emerging recommendations specifically pertaining to homeless students during the COVID-19 pandemic offered by SchoolHouse Connection and that may be available from other sources over time.

6. ☐ The school is following social media accounts of and subscribes to the mailing lists for organizations that will consolidate and disseminate recommendations and resources to support homeless students throughout the pandemic, including the National Center on Homeless Education, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and SchoolHouse Connection.

7. ☐ The school assesses the living situations and other characteristics of students flagged as experiencing homelessness in their student record to help triage where the greatest support will be needed for these students to fully participate in distance learning. For example, students who are presently unsheltered or staying somewhere not meant for habitation may have a more difficult time participating in distance learning than students who are staying in an emergency shelter that is equipped with internet access.

8. ☐ The school is developing, implementing, and distributing an assessment of each student's needs related to distance learning that does not presume that students have stable or consistent housing. This assessment should be easy for parents or guardians to

complete and guide them to resources to help meet basic requirements for participation in distance learning (e.g., a consistent place to do homework that allows students to concentrate).

9. ☐ Existing or alternative transportation options will be deployed to meet basic student needs that would normally be met at school, such as delivery of meals, educational materials, or other resources.

10. ☐ Distance learning does not require access to specific technology, including computers, telephones, or internet, and that specifies options for students who do not have access to these things.

11. ☐ The school is engaging local shelters or other locations where students experiencing homelessness may be concentrated (e.g., emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, drop-in centers for homeless youth, etc.) to help strengthen the ability to support students' participation in distance learning. This could include, for example, loaning computers from a school computer lab to a location where students could use them within a shelter to do their homework.

12. ☐ The school is engaging local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care region on planning efforts to meet the needs of homeless students throughout the pandemic to develop protocols for how schools would identify and meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness in ways that are consistent with protecting student privacy, including the special provisions that apply in emergencies.

13. ☐ The school is engaging local libraries to assess their ability to help support students success with distance learning, including study spaces, computer access, and access to instructional materials.

14. ☐ The school has established a hotline for students who may have difficulties participating in distance learning to use in connecting with school personnel who can help troubleshoot or identify options, ideally with the option to allow text messaging in addition to telephone calls.

15. ☐ Expectations for distance learning do not require students to check in or report attendance over video or audio connections, which may be infeasible in the setting where a student is located.

16. ☐ Students and parents know to contact the school if their living situation changes and to access additional support to promote every student's ability to participate in distance learning and can do so.

17. ☐ The school monitors participation and engagement of all students, including specifically homeless students, in distance learning (e.g., including both attendance and performance), to help guide whether additional staff support, engagement, or assistance are needed for students experiencing homelessness.

18. ☐ The school's schedule includes leadership-level reviews of the efficacy of distance learning plans and approaches for homeless students, and consider alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review.

Early Learning

1. ☐ If the school provides programs such as a voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus, they included in the distance learning plan.

2. ☐ If the school provides VPK and SRP programs, the school ensures that through the implementation of age-appropriate distance learning activities, programs meet minimum hour requirements excluding the instructional hours that would have occurred during the ten day planning period.

3. ☐ The school has reviewed the guidance on creating a distance learning plan for prekindergarten children.

4. ☐ If a school provides Early Learning Scholarship Programs, the school ensures that absent days will not be counted towards the 25 maximum absent days policy in order for families to make individual decisions that are best for their families. Programs that temporarily close due to response to COVI-19 mitigation, regardless of program type, will have closure days waived for the duration of the crisis. Programs receiving Pathway II funds, can continue to request payment for the slot. Pathway I may continue to invoice the Area Administrators.

State Assessment

1. ☐ The school maintains security of any state test materials it currently has

Before and After Care

1. ☐ All before and after school care is suspended until further notice.

2. ☐ The school identifies and coordinates with community partners to provide before and after school care and communicates with families about the options if possible.

Communication

1. ☐ The school has considered the following in communicating with families, community partners/members and media
   - When and how to expect communication from the district
   - Where they can find the distance learning plan on your website (must be posted on website before distance learning begins)
   - What is the structure of distance learning in your district?
   - When will educators and school leaders be available and how can they be reached?
   - How will students be able to retrieve their belongings from school (from lockers, etc.)?
   - Student expectations (attendance, assignments, hours, due dates, etc.)
   - Reminder about Student Information System and how to sign up
   - How to access meals
   - How to access telehealth
   - How to access best practices around health from MDH

Community partners often include (but not limited to): first-responders, local government, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, libraries, businesses, child care centers, associations

2. ☐ The school has identified needs and is making language translation and interpretation of information available to families in need.

3. ☐ The school has considered what aspects of regular service will be changing (school lunch menu, busing services, etc.) and communicated to contracted service providers to have a plan in place.

4. ☐ The school is communicating clear expectations to staff how they will report their attendance

5. ☐ The school is communicating clear expectations around staff presence at each building and taking into consideration school agreements, contracts, and policies.

Activities

1. ☐ The school has suspended all in-person school-sponsored activities that were scheduled during the statewide school closure until in-person school resumes

Staff

1. ☐ The school is ensuring that during the distance learning planning period, training is being provided to staff (including: classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, school support staff) on distance learning practices.

2. ☐ The school's distance learning plan takes into consideration how to utilize human resources in a virtual way (in-person school may not be resumed for a long time)

3. ☐ Because districts and charters will be receiving full funding for providing distance learning, the school ensures that all staff, including non-salaried, hourly staff, will earn pay and benefits as planned in the school budget and agreements.

4. ☐ The school has a plan in place for the school to continue performing its essential functions if its leadership and key staff are unable to perform their duties.

5. ☐ The school accommodates medically vulnerable staff.

6. ☐ Staff necessary to be in building in order to implement the distance learning plan which includes care for your elementary school-age children and must follow the most recent guidelines for social distancing.

7. ☐ Staff uses information from the MN Dept of Health and CDC website to verify and then request that they need an accommodation such as work from home (for example, a medical condition that could make them vulnerable to COVID-19 complications). NOTE: The school cannot ask the staff for information about the underlying condition that puts them at risk as that is private data.

8. ☐ School employees report to work in accordance with applicable labor agreements and as required to assist with the emergency management planning activities.

9. ☐ Staff is paid as usual if working whether at home or at school. If staff cannot do their work from home, the school and staff can determine another assignment so that they can work from home.

10. ☐ For staff at home and not working because they are sick, they take sick leave in accordance with applicable labor agreements.

Other Workers

1. ☐ The school maintains collaboration and contracts with bus transportation providers that they currently work with. These professionals are instrumental in supporting the

efforts of distance learning specifically for transporting the students of our healthcare and emergency care workers and food to students throughout the community.

2. ☐ On-call subs are not be eligible for ongoing pay during the closure or distance learning if they are not working. However, if the school called in a sub to provide or plan for distance learning or they are were already on contract as a long-term sub, they would be paid like they normally would.

Board

1. ☐ The board has reviewed 13D Open Meeting Law and understands how to conduct board business during a Pandemic

2. ☐ The board reviews the most updated guidance on the MDE COVID-19 site (currently [03-17-20: School Closure Guidance for Minnesota Public School Districts and Charter Schools](#) but updated daily) and is providing oversight and working with the school leadership to provide appropriate support to meet the guidelines

Resources from the MN Dept of Health and CDC

1. ☐ The school is reviewing all updates from MDH and CDC daily. MDE is providing links to prioritized information in the **School Closure Guidance for School Districts and Charter Schools** which is updated daily.

2. ☐ The school is maintaining an up to date contact list and getting resources from appropriate contacts.

- For general questions about COVID-19, please email the Minnesota Department of Health or call their hotline at 651-201-3920.
- For general education questions, use MDEs COVID-19 general email:
- COVID-19.Questions.MDE@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about online and distance learning, please contact jeff.plaman@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about school meal programs, please contact monica.herrera@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about special education, please contact robyn.widley@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about civil rights compliance, please contact marikay.litzau@state.mn.us
- For relevant guidance regarding how schools can protect civil rights during an outbreak, see the U.S. DoE Office for Civil Rights Fact Sheet released during the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

- For specific questions about state assessments, please contact
  mde.testing@state.mn.us
- Questions about the distance learning plans can go to
  distance.learning.mde@state.mn.us

Below is a hotline that has been created for families to obtain information about childcare resources and other general questions about the school closure. While many of the details around specific plans will come at the school level, please feel free to share the hotline with your families to inquire about state level resources and questions.

The State Information Hotline at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) will be staffed from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to answer questions about childcare resources and general questions during the time of school closure.

Metro: 651-297-1304
Greater Minnesota: 1-800-657-3504

This document is provided as a word document so that each school can make any corrections and updates necessary.

Questions about this document? Please call Wendy Swanson Choi at 612-889-2103