

## **Introduction and Overview**

This guidance is intended to support school districts, charter schools, and private schools in re-opening school facilities and transitioning to in-person instruction over the summer months as local conditions allow. The summer learning and activities contemplated by this guidance include:

- In-person instruction involving students and staff, including summer school, high school credit recovery, career and technical education, and extended school year programming;
- Other instructional activities such as special education evaluations and individualized tutoring;
- Administrative activities by educators, staff, or students such as locker/classroom clean out and returning/retrieving devices and instruments;
- Planning activities by educators and staff such as professional development and instructional planning; or
- Family and community engagement activities such as school registration, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and volunteer and partnership planning.

This guidance supports districts and schools in applying Phase One and Two guidelines and protocols to school settings and relates only to summer learning and activities. NDE's Re-Opening of Schools Committee (Committee) has developed a framework for districts and charter schools to plan for and implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school buildings in the fall. The Committee is comprised of State health officials, district superintendents and staff, charter school leaders, school safety experts, and others. The Committee's work is not a substitute for local planning, but rather provides a foundation from which district and school leaders can create local plans for the 2020-21 school year that will also be applicable for future emergency planning and response.

This guidance supersedes all previous guidance issued by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) regarding the use of school buildings / facilities. As necessary, this guidance will be updated to reflect the latest re-opening guidelines and protocols promulgated by Nevada's Local Empowerment Advisory Panel (LEAP). To the extent that this guidance may conflict with guidelines and protocols promulgated by LEAP, the LEAP guidelines shall prevail.

*For guidance related to athletics activities, districts/schools should refer to guidance from the Nevada Interscholastic Athletics Association (NIAA).*

*This guidance was adapted from Nevada's [Phase One Guidelines and Protocols for Reopening](#), the [Roadmap to Recovery for Nevada: Phase Two](#), and guidance created by the Texas Education Agency.*

*Nothing in this guidance is intended to supersede or abridge local collective bargaining agreements.*

## **Public Health Considerations**

COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control, among others, has found that while children can be infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, at times long after asymptomatic infection. A child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, educators, staff, and families significantly.

Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in this guidance and the guidelines and protocols promulgated by Nevada's Local Empowerment Advisory Panel (LEAP).

## **Guidance**

Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency Directive 022 allows districts/schools to reopen facilities to students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members. Directive 022 also specifies that school districts, charter schools, and private schools may keep school buildings, facilities, and/or athletic fields closed to students, staff, parents/guardians, and/or the public at their discretion in the interest of the health and safety of their school community.

The sections below provide a brief outline of considerations for inviting students, staff, and parents/guardians back to school campuses for summer learning and activities. In accordance with Directive 022, county school districts, charter schools, and private schools shall develop plans for reopening school buildings, providing instruction, related activities for the 2020-2021 school year based on *Nevada's Path Forward: A Framework for a Safe, Efficient, and Equitable Return to School Buildings*. County school districts, charter schools and private schools shall present their plans for the 2020-2021 school year to their governing body as prescribed in Directive 022.

## **Bringing Students on Campus**

1. School districts and charter schools may provide summer learning opportunities through:
  - a. Distance education under an approved Emergency Program of Distance Education;
  - b. In-person instruction following strict social distancing protocols; or
  - c. A combination of distance education and in-person instruction.

Any instructional activity to be completed at school must either be optional or, if the instructional activity is credit-bearing, then the instructional activity must be able to be completed through distance education, which may include paper correspondence.

2. Districts/schools may consider prioritizing the availability of in-person instruction for:
  - a. Students with significant academic gaps;

- b. Students with disabilities whose needs are best addressed in an in-person environment and are otherwise not medically at-risk;
  - c. Student learning experiences that cannot be conducted virtually, such as career and technical education;
  - d. Students experiencing homelessness;
  - e. English Learners; or
  - f. Younger elementary and pre-Kindergarten students who may struggle in the virtual learning environment.
3. School facilities may operate at 50% of the maximum capacity for each space/area. No more than 50 individuals (students and staff) should be in an enclosed space within a school facility while maintaining social distancing. For example, no more than 50 individuals should be in a single office suite, classroom, gymnasium, or other confined space at a single time.

### **Logistical Considerations**

Encourage staff and students to practice social distancing through communications, signage, and modeling desired behaviors.

1. All instruction must be held in spaces that allow students and staff to remain at least six feet apart. Desks/seats should be placed to allow students and staff to remain at least six feet apart.
2. Whenever possible and developmentally appropriate, there should be no group or pairs work that would require students to regularly interact within six feet, recognizing that this is not possible for early childhood students and some students with disabilities.
3. When feasible and appropriate, it is preferable for students to gather outside rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors. Consider keeping windows and doors open to promote air circulation in indoor spaces.
4. Students on campus should not participate in activities that would make it difficult to maintain consistent social distancing or with the likely potential for spreading the virus through respiratory droplets, for example:
  - a. Dancing;
  - b. Choir, singing;
  - c. Playing brass and wind instruments; and
  - d. Physical education and moderate or high-risk sports as defined by NIAA guidance.
5. Whenever possible, students should not be brought together in gatherings outside of their class group unless distancing of 30 feet between groups can be maintained. For example, if Ms. Smith's class has 28 students and Mr. Garcia's class has 18 students, they should not be combined into a single group or sharing a single space for an activity unless there is at least 30 feet separating the classes from one another.
6. Whenever possible, consistent groupings of people (students and staff) should be maintained to minimize virus spread in the school community.
7. Whenever possible, students should learn in the same space throughout the day and teachers and staff should move between spaces to minimize the need to sanitize spaces between uses and minimize congestion in hallways.

8. Plan for entry and exit procedures that reduce the number of people congregating in large spaces or mixing in hallways, including potentially organizing one-way hallways. Consider staggering start and end times and assigning individuals to entries to ensure distribution at each door. Provide signage and tape floors to maintain social distancing and provide guidance to individuals to enter one at a time.
9. Consider having students eat lunch at their desks or assigned seats in the cafeteria to maintain social distancing.
10. Consider closing spaces where large groups of people may gather without opportunities for proper cleaning protocols between uses such as conference rooms or play spaces.

### Health and Hygiene Practices

1. Districts/schools should work with local health officials to put in place health screening protocols for staff prior to returning to campus.
2. Districts/schools should work with local health officials to determine and implement health screening protocols for students each day that they arrive on campus.
3. District/schools should determine visitor policies and screening protocols for parents/guardians/public prior to entering campus.
4. Schools should have hand sanitizer at each designated entrance of a school facility and require individuals to use it upon their initial entry to the school facility. Hand sanitizer should also be available in every classroom, and students and staff should be encouraged to use it frequently.
5. Students should be reminded of good handwashing techniques and given frequent opportunities to wash and/or sanitize their hands.
6. To the extent practicable, supplies (e.g., markers, books) should be designated for use by individual students; if that is not possible, supplies should be sanitized between use by different students.
7. Consistent with LEAP protocols, all staff should be required to wear face coverings to the extent practicable. It is recommended that all students for whom it is developmentally appropriate wear face coverings (over the nose and mouth), except while doing an activity during which a face covering cannot be worn (e.g., eating). It is most likely *not* developmentally appropriate for students younger than five years old and for some students with disabilities to wear face coverings.
8. Districts/schools should institute more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by custodial/janitorial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate. Arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day. Arrange for cleaning of classrooms between different class groups if the same room will be used by multiple class groups. This would include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets. The Centers for Disease Control has provided [guidance](#) on cleaning community buildings to prevent COVID-19 spread. During cleaning, open windows to allow for additional ventilation and air flow, which is helpful in mitigating COVID-19 spread.

## Transportation

1. Districts/schools should reduce the number of students on a bus and consider grouping bus routes to align to class groupings to minimize cross-group exposure.
2. Provide guidelines and communications around maintaining social distancing at bus stops to bus drivers, parents/guardians, and students as needed.
3. Students and staff should use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
4. Students should be seated at least six feet from other students on the bus (in most cases, this will mean one student per row, on opposite sides of the bus). Students should stay in their seats and enter and exit the bus in an organized fashion to maintain social distancing.
5. Encourage families to drop students off or walk with their student[s] to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses. Carpools that would mix members from different households should be avoided.
6. Buses should be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, particularly high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, open windows to allow for additional ventilation and air flow, which is helpful in mitigating COVID-19 spread.

## Questions and Answers

### Summer Learning

**Question: Can schools provide in-person instruction over the summer (e.g., summer school, extended school year, special education services, etc.)?**

**Answer:** Yes. School districts and charter schools may provide summer learning opportunities through:

- Distance education under an approved Emergency Program of Distance Education;
- In-person instruction following strict social distancing protocols; or
- A combination of distance education and in-person instruction.

**Q: Directive 022 says summer learning may be provided through distance education under an approved Emergency Program of Distance Education. Do we need to request additional approval or is our approval from March still active?**

**A:** All districts and charter schools that received approval from the Superintendent of Public Instruction for an Emergency Program of Distance Education may continue operating under that approval for summer instruction and end of school year 2019-20 programming. The Superintendent of Public Instruction retains the authority to revoke approval of Emergency Programs that fail to meet expectations. Specific guidance from the Department of Education regarding Path Forward Programs of Distance Education for the 2020-21 school year as referenced in Directive 022 is forthcoming.

**Q: Directive 022 says summer learning opportunities offered in-person must be optional or there must be a distance education option. All of our summer learning is optional. What does this mean?**

**A:** Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the different circumstances families may be facing with regard to childcare and medically vulnerable relatives, it is important that students are not required to go to the school site if it would cause an undue burden or creates a health and safety concern. For example, if high school seniors are being offered the opportunity for credit recovery to graduate this summer, those opportunities must have a distance education option.

**Q: Are schools required to re-open or provide in-person instruction over the summer?**

**A:** No. School districts, charter schools, and private schools, may keep school buildings and/or facilities closed to students, staff, parents/guardians, and/or the public at their discretion in the interest of the health and safety of their school community.

**Social Distancing, Gatherings, and Hygiene**

**Q: Do district/school employees have to wear face coverings? Do students?**

**A:** Phase One & Two guidelines indicate that all employers shall require employees who interact with the public to wear face coverings to the maximum extent practicable. This applies to district/school employees who are interacting in-person with students, parents/guardians, and community members. Students and school visitors are strongly recommended, but not required, to wear face masks in public.

**Q: Phase Two guidelines indicate that establishments may operate at 50% maximum capacity. Does that mean we can host a gathering in a large space that includes more than 50 people?**

**A:** No. The 50-person limitation on gatherings trumps all other Phase Two guidelines and protocols; even if you have a room at your school site that could hold 100 people at 50% capacity, you may only have 50 people gathered in a single space at a time. For graduation ceremonies at larger schools, this may entail holding multiple small ceremonies so parents/guardians can attend.

**Q: Phase Two guidelines limit private and public gatherings to 50 or fewer people, unless individuals live in the same household. Does this mean that only 50 or fewer people can be on school grounds or in a school building at a time?**

**A:** In a school setting, limits on gatherings should apply to spaces/areas within school facilities, rather than an entire school site. For example, no more than 50 individuals should be in a single office suite, classroom, gymnasium, or other confined space at a single time, and social distancing protocols should be strictly followed. If more than one group is using a shared space that is large enough to allow for students in all groups and their respective learning spaces to be six feet apart, then multiple groups of individuals can be in a space together. However, each group must be separated from the other by at least 30 feet and the total number of individuals must not exceed 50.

When more than 50 people are gathering on a school site for different purposes, plans should be put in place to minimize crowding in hallways or restrooms, gathering places (e.g., cafeterias, conference rooms) should be closed to the extent practicable, and individuals should be instructed to use specific exits and entrances so screening and cleaning protocols can be implemented. One-way hallways may be implemented to organize flow and maintain social distancing.

**Q: Can more than 50 people be gathered for the purposes of a socially distant athletics training session or practice?**

**A:** Please refer to the NIAA guidelines for Phase Two and Phase Three recommendations.

**Q: Can districts/schools implement requirements that are stricter than what is included in this guidance?**

**A:** As written in LEAP guidance, local entities can impose stricter requirements than the statewide standards.

**Q: Can schools host drive-up graduation ceremonies and celebrations?**

**A:** Yes. Districts/schools may conduct drive-in graduation ceremonies and other drive-in events following strict social distancing protocols.

**Q: Can schools host graduation ceremonies and celebrations with 50 people or fewer?**

**A:** Yes. Districts/schools may conduct ceremonies and celebrations with 50 attendees or fewer following strict social distancing protocols. Plans should also be made to stagger exit and entrance times and to avoid crowding in hallways, restrooms, etc. If food is being served, all items should be individually sealed and distributed in an organized fashion so that cleaning protocols can be implemented intermittently as needed. Phase One and Two guidelines do *not* allow food to be offered through self-serve options.

**Q: What do we do if a student, staff, or community member tests positive for COVID-19 or has in contact with someone who has tested positive?**

**A:** Consult with local public health officials and refer to [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) guidance](#) on quarantine and isolation, CDC [Considerations for Schools](#), CDC [Considerations for School Closure](#), and [CDC FAQs for Administrators](#).

School Visitors / Community Partners

**Q: Are parents/guardians allowed on school campuses for school registration, meetings, etc.?**

**A:** Under Directive 022, districts/schools may open school facilities to parents/guardians. Local governing bodies and district/school leaders may wish to set local policies and protocols regarding the circumstances under which parents/guardians and other community members may use school facilities, if at all.

**Q: Can partner organizations use district/school sites and, if so, for what purposes?**

**A:** Districts/schools may decide the extent to which the use of district/school grounds by partner organizations, external entities, and community members is practicable/allowable. Districts/schools should ensure all guidelines regarding maximum capacity of spaces, social distancing, and cleaning/hygiene are followed in such cases.

Travel

**Q: Are district/school employees and students allowed to travel within Nevada for school/work-related purposes?**

**A:** Yes. When planning travel, districts/schools should take into consideration the risks of staff and students spending extended periods of time in confined spaces between destinations. All social distancing protocols should be followed.

**Q: Are district/school employees and students allowed to travel outside of Nevada for school/work-related purposes?**

**A:** Phase One guidelines direct Nevadans to avoid non-essential travel and adhere to self-quarantine and monitor health for 14 days after arriving or returning to Nevada. School- and district-sponsored out-of-state travel should be suspended until further notice. You may also wish to refer to the [May 29 travel advisory](#) issued by the Governor as well as [CDC guidance](#).

**Q: Are Nevada districts/schools allowed to host events with districts/schools from other states?**

**A:** As of the [travel advisory](#) released on May 29, 2020, Nevada continues to strongly discourage those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not yet recovered, those who have been presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19, and those who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms from traveling to the State at this time. Additionally, Nevada recommends all travelers review [CDC travel guidelines](#), including restriction on travelers from certain foreign countries from entering the United States.