THE SAFE SCHOOL SEVEN
Critical Components of Remote Education Plans[1]

Authorizing in 2020-21: Ready for Anything! Given that charter schools are generally smaller, and less bureaucratic, they are positioned to respond to and navigate through these unprecedented times nimbly and quickly. Charter school authorizers must also act nimbly and quickly to create the conditions for schools' governance and leadership teams to successfully meet the needs of their students and fulfill their mission. This means that authorizers may need to fast-track charter amendments that allow schools to provide learning remotely; incorporate additional or substitute assessments in charter goals; and offer families choice in delivery methods, which may be captured in a remote learning plan addendum to a charter contract or agreement. To allow for flexibility, approve remote learning plans assuming the following:

- **To help facilitate innovative approaches, authorizers should only require changes to the Educational Plan that are substantive and material**. Examples of material changes include when a school's instructional model uses Socratic seminar and it is replaced with asynchronous independent learning or a required internship is replaced with a self-paced research project or a STEM school replaces its emphasis on hands-on labs with scientific data analysis.

- **There are multiple ways of delivering and facilitating learning when not in person.** To ensure equal access, differentiated learning, appropriate accommodations, and considerations for families and staff, schools will likely explore many methods. One method is on-line instruction or e-learning via computer or tablet. Other methods include facilitating learning that is completed off-line and uploaded, or using traditional tools such as manipulatives, books, paper and pencil. Another aspect is whether learning occurs for all students at the same time (synchronous) such as a class zoom meeting, or if students choose their learning time (asynchronous) such as pre-recorded videos and self-paced units of study, or a combination of both.

- **All, some, or a few students and teachers may engage in remote-learning at varying times throughout a school year.** Given that safety is every school and authorizer's number one focus, schools need the flexibility to determine when, and established policies and procedures to determine how, to engage in remote-learning.

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[1] Created by the National Charter School Institute in collaboration with Nevada Action for School Options founder and president, Don Soifer. Don has served on charter authorizing boards in Nevada and the District of Columbia, on school governing boards in several states, and has published many articles, testimonies and presentations on topics related to both personalized and blended learning implementation as well as charter school policy, governance, and research. You can learn more about our work at https://nationalcharterschools.org/.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Mission Statement	A statement affirming how the school's mission will be fulfilled when learning is remote.	How will missions that involve instructional components such as Expeditionary learning, Montessori, 21st Century Skills be taught remotely?

Timely Identification and Intervention	A plan for and monitoring of timely identification and intervention of students who are struggling due to:
	      Trouble with content
	      Trouble with technology
	      Lack of resources.
		How will a teacher notice when the student has their "head on the desk and eyes closed" or "throws the book down in frustration" when remote, or simply submits random answers?
		Who is the student's IT department when something freezes, breaks, or they get confused? How will a teacher notice when a student "forgot his backpack?" Lost his notebook? Has only unsharpened pencils?

Supplies, Technology, Materials	A plan for disseminating, maintaining, and replenishing materials.	Examples: computers, tablets, phones, hotspots, books, manipulatives, science equipment, paper, scissors, art supplies.

Data-Informed Instruction	A plan for continuous learning and data-informed decision-making:
	    For the student and their family
	    For grade-level and content-area teams
		How will teachers have the opportunity to work in teams? How often will teachers give formal and informal feedback to families and to students? What is the process for ensuring collaborative planning time?

Assessment Integrity	Assessment Integrity Plan to ensure formative and summative assessments are built to be immune to the easy access some students will have to "help".	Given the number of resources at many student's fingertips when at home: Internet, books, family members, friends, social media, how will assessments be sure to measure just the student's original thinking and understanding?
Daily Schedule	Explanation of how the students' day will be structured.	When will a student be required and/or able to engage at a set time and when will they have flexibility? How will these expectations directly impact the structure and length of the school day for students and staff and how accommodations will be made?

Student Engagement/Behavior and Social-Emotional Support

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Student Engagement Tracking	Codify the method and indicators for capturing student engagement, including reporting and analysis.	How will the school record attendance? What counts as "engagement"? How is the data stored? Are there incentives for engagement? What changes to the student information system will occur? How will these data be analyzed for trends and reported for accountability?
Nonresponsive Students Plan	Identification and notification process for when a student "goes silent" or is missing.	What is the process for when a student does not "engage"? How will you know if the student is safe? At what point will intervention occur? What will the intervention be? How will the root cause be determined and resolved?
Activating "Stalled Students"	Identification and intervention for when a student is present but not completing, or successfully completing, work.	What is the intervention plan for when a student who is "engaged" but not grasping the content or not producing quality (any) work due to the student having trouble with the content?
Student Re-engagement Strategy	Identification and intervention for when a student is not getting an answer right because they are not actually engaged in the learning (guessing without trying versus not knowing the answer).	What is the intervention plan for when a student is "engaged" physically but "checked out" and not asserting visible effort?
Student Social-Emotional Well-being	Identification and intervention for students who are exhibiting signs of social-emotional distress.	What are signs of trauma, depression, hunger, abuse, neglect, homelessness, etc. that staff can observe remotely? How will staff be trained and respond to a student exhibiting signs?
Student Well-being	Revise policies to include remote plans for student safety including, but not limited to: physical health and wellness, mental health and wellness, student safety, and community building.	Ensure that staff and board members are fully aware of legal requirements in protecting students' well-being. Is school administration taking steps to support teachers and avoid over-burdening teachers' workloads?

Equitable Access to Learning

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Technology	A plan to continuously monitor every student's technology needs, if needed for communication and learning.	Examples: computer, tablet, smartphone, software, hotspot, Internet access, speed, and cost.
Schedule Accommodations	Accommodations for when learning cannot occur during a set time or when more structure is needed for asynchronous learning.	How will a "makeup" session be made available to students who cannot engage at a specified time due to circumstances outside of their control?
Work with Changing Family Schedules	A plan to identify and accommodate families for which asynchronous (anytime, anywhere) or synchronous (time-bound) learning can be untenable at times.	Examples: Recorded lessons, small groups with an aide for structured support, and tutoring.
Device Flexibility	Platforms that can be used on multiple devices and do not require licenses or payment.	For families without an available computer, or an older model, where school cannot provide devices, consider that all platforms can be accessed through tablets, smartphones, Kindles, and with limited broadband, etc.
Nutrition	Meal distribution.	When students are remote, how will families eligible for Free and reduced-price meals receive meals and information about meals?

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Special Populations

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Special Education	ADA, 504, and IDEA are all legal requirements that must be met during remote learning.	How will the school hold legally required special education meetings to address identification, continuation of service, 504 and IEPs? How will observations be conducted? How will assessment be conducted? What learning supports will families receive to meet the needs of their students that mirror the accommodations and modifications outlined in their IEPs?
English Learners	Review education program for English language acquisition assessments, English language delivery model, English language monitoring, and translation services for families.	How will student English language acquisition be monitored and assessed? How will content be delivered? What further plans are needed when the home language is not English to support student learning? How will the school communicate with families who do not speak English?
Gifted and Talented	Identification and accommodations for students who are mastering content at greater speed and deeper understanding than grade level standards require.	How will students be identified who are excelling in mastering content and "stretch" assignments provided?
Other Populations Identified by School or State Law	Many states also identify subgroups such as homeless through McKinney-Vento or at-risk. Each special population should have a separate policy for compliance and content delivery.	Are policies and procedures that address the learning and compliance aspects of every student population identified revised?

Staff Professional Development

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Implementing Remote Learning	As schools modify instructional models to adapt to remote learning, ensure they prioritize professional development to help teachers succeed with the new approach.	How will teachers learn, troubleshoot, provide feedback, ask for help, receive support when teaching remotely? How will teachers receive feedback from coaches and administrators? How will teachers be evaluated?
Technology	Provide technology support for teachers, as needed.	What does a teacher do if technology fails? What resources does a teacher have to improve their understanding of remote learning via technology (if applicable)? Does school provide IT support staff to support teachers?
Student Safety	Recognize and report indications of abuse and student safety when teaching remotely.	What new training are available to staff for mandated reporting? Given cameras and video access, how will expectations be communicated to families?
Create or Redesign Units of Study	From introducing new content, to facilitating practice, to monitoring of student learning, to assessing student mastery, each step of a unit plan needs to be re-envisioned for students working remotely.	How will teachers have time to revisit all of their lessons to ensure that they are effective when facilitated remotely?

Family Engagement

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Track Family Needs	Continually track, report on, and resolve individual family needs and concerns.	How will families provide feedback to the school on student learning? Hardships? Frustrations? And how often will the school engage in parent-teacher check-ins?
Disseminate Current Information	Plan for disseminating information when remote and in-person learning changes throughout the year.	What happens if the school needs to go remote after being in-person? What happens when a schedule no longer works after implementation? What happens when a teacher is absent and cannot be reached? What happens when the school community must be notified of a tragedy or a celebration?
Update Family Contacts	Ensure continuous up-to-date contact information for every family.	How will current cell phone numbers, addresses, email addresses, social-media handles be captured?
Family Services and Supports	Provide or revise family services and supports as committed to in Charter, if applicable.	Does the charter commit the school to offering families classes in parenting, job skills, nutrition, health and well-being? Will this commitment remain? If so, how?

Resiliency for Managing through Crisis

Key Component	Description	Prompts/Questions/Examples
Teacher Shortages	Create a plan for when teachers are unable to provide instruction and are unable to support student learning.	Will there be substitute teachers? Will teachers teach in teams? Will there be aides to support? Are there plans for hiring when remote?
Internet Access Interruptions	Prolonged or wide-spread internet or system outage (for teachers and/or students).	What will the school do if remote learning relies on technology and technology fails, broadly or intermittently/localized?
Protect Against Hacking and Inappropriate Content	Accessing inappropriate content on school-issued devices by a third party or by a member of the school's community.	Can the school create remote firewalls? What safeguards are in place on school-owned devices to protect against exposures to viruses and hacking? Are secure portals in place for submitting documents? What software can monitor use? What additional protection of student rights and privacy are needed under FERPA? How will cameras be used?
Data Loss and Corruption	Student work, engagement data, student assessments will be on data systems that may break.	How will backup be provided to students and teachers who are not physically within the school building?
A Second Wave	While the school may go back to in-person learning for some or all students, plan for the need for all or some to work remotely without time to prepare.	How will teachers and students be able to access their materials safely if at the school building? How will learning change? What will happen with assessments? What is the role of the school's board in determining school operations?