



### **Introduction- Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)**

State law requires that the K–12 public school system develop and maintain comprehensive safe school plans that address the major safety threats to a school environment. The plan should collaborate with local community safety agencies to develop plans that work for students, staff, parents, and community members. Many schools will have most of the information outlined in the following template already. However, OSPI recognizes that school districts are at different levels of planning and designed the following Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) template in an attempt to provide a common language for emergency planning throughout the state. The template included in this section highlights some of the issues that may arise in a pandemic or other infectious disease outbreak, and can be adapted to fit the particular needs of each school district.



## **Continuity of Operations Plans-- Concept of Operations**

The flu regularly causes high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in the country's 119,000 schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools—nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school. Avian flu and SARS have heightened awareness for a potential influenza pandemic, and a likely event according to many of public health officials. A “pandemic” is different from an “epidemic” by virtue of its’ higher rates of fatalities, and the duration of severe impact upon the population. The K–12 public school system is a central stakeholder in the discussion regarding planning, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from such an event, as children and adolescents are considered to be responsible for the highest percentage of transmission of such diseases.

There is consensus from the public health community that the school system, both public and private, would likely close to limit the spread of the disease. Since this disease has a longer duration than most, closure might last for several weeks or several months. WA State Dept. of Health has stated that when the first human case arrives in North America, the Secretary of Health will call the Local Health Officers (LHO) and convene the Public Health Rapid Assessment Team (PHRAT). The PHRAT will discuss actions to be taken, length of closures, and timing of the onset, providing a consistent plan for implementation of closures. When the first case is diagnosed in either Western or Eastern Washington, the PHRAT will recommend school closure for that region. The LHOs will then inform superintendents of their decision, and the PHRAT will continue to meet at least weekly. This places the school system in the position of attempting to address the health and safety, legal, fiscal, policy and planning issues that may result as existing plans and programs stretch beyond their normal boundaries.

State law RCW 28A.320.125, requires schools to develop “comprehensive safe school plans” to provide schools with a comprehensive plan to prepare schools for potential emergencies of a multi-hazard nature. Most of the hazards and threats addressed in these plans assume that schools could resume operation within a short period of time, and would not interfere with the instructional process or the acquisition of credits for graduation. The state law can be found on line at: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.320.125> .

OSPI has developed a “School Safety Planning Manual”, which addresses school district obligations for the general planning and documentation process. An electronic version of the manual can be found on the OSPI – School Safety Center Web site at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/Planning/SafetyPlanningManual.aspx>).

The predictions for a flu pandemic, however, clearly impact both the instructional process and the ability to acquire credits through conventional methods for graduation. Hence, it is important to address the notion of “continuity of education” as part of the larger Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The “COOP” is a plan that provides the schools, and major stakeholders

(including parents) with a framework for maintaining operation under periods of duress. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed standardized definitions and methods for agencies adopting or revising their COOP. An electronic version to adapt can be found at the FEMA Web site: (<http://www.fema.gov/government/coop/index.shtm>). However, no federal agency has developed specific COOP guidance for the K-12 school system.

The guidance within this manual provides a template, modified from the work of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whereby schools can work through each element in a step-by-step sequential manner to create a customized COOP guideline of their own.

From the perspective of the comprehensive safe school plan, the ideal pan flu program for a school would include a COOP, taking into consideration U. S. Dept. of Education pan flu guidelines, and a set of policies and procedures that authorize the array of actions that might be required to be prepared for such an event. Guidance on all three components has been addressed in this manual, providing local authorities and stakeholders with the necessary resources.

OSPI, school nurses, and the health community recommend adapting and adding a new section to an existing WSSDA policy on Infectious Diseases. Section III of this manual provides recommended language for this addition based on reviews and input from two focus groups (in Spokane and Renton, and from a thorough review by the multi-stakeholder, multi-agency School Safety Advisory Committee).

The COOP is not only an important component of communicable/infectious disease planning; it is an important part of comprehensive safe school planning and can be applied to power outages, floods, earthquakes, and other similar hazards where schools might be impacted over significant period of time.

OSPI appreciates the input and efforts of those involved in the development of this manual, and in particular, Madeline Beery, the DOH Pan Flu Preparedness Manager.



## Pandemic Influenza—Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Template

(Adapted from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Pandemic Influenza COOP)

To be better prepared for a flu pandemic or other disease outbreak, it is recommended that all schools use this form to complete a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Though this is not all-inclusive, this template will assist in guiding the school to operate during an influenza pandemic and also recover afterwards to be fully operational in the most effective manner possible. This plan can be customized to meet each school’s specific needs, operations, and location. The process of planning for an emergency is very valuable. It is crucial that you collaborate with your staff members and the community for input and leadership.

Plan Developer(s):	Date Plan Finalized:		
Point of Contact:			
Contact Information:	Email:	Phone Number:	Alt. Phone Number:

### A: Background Information

Three influenza pandemics occurred in the last century, and public health experts predict that another will happen, though no one can predict when this will be or the severity. (For more detailed information regarding influenza, see the Introduction and Background Information). It is, however, prudent to plan for one so that:

- The risk of pandemic influenza to students, faculty, and staff will be minimized;
- Students who require special support will be taken care of;
- Functions essential to operations will continue, even in an altered fashion;
- An information notification system can be set up for staff and families; and
- After the pandemic, normal teaching and school activities will resume as soon as possible.

### Planning assumptions:

1. Pandemic flu will be widely dispersed geographically and could potentially arrive in waves.



### C: Emergency Communication Systems

Schools have the dual responsibility of communicating with staff and also with parents. Each school district will be responsible for keeping informed of emergencies by monitoring news media reports. Developing a separate communication annex is often useful so that all communications documentation is readily available for supporting updates, advisories, and alerts, which can be defined as:

- **Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention
- **Advisory:** provides key information for a specific incident or situation; might not require immediate action
- **Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

Systems will need to be established for the following Internal and External Communications purposes:

- Notification to staff/students/parents of operational changes
- Provide frequent updates about the pandemic status
- Provide advisories and alerts as conditions change
- Ensure vendors and suppliers have available a dedicated communications contact
- Monitor local, state, and federal pandemic updates
- Establish contacts with local health agencies

It will be crucial to advise district staff, students, and families where to find up-to-date and reliable information from federal, state, and local public health sources, as well as the school's own announcements. One way of rapidly communicating with employees in an emergency is a call tree. This can also be done with parents (possibly with PTA). Note below the system (s) you will use to contact your employees in an emergency. Multiple communication systems should be identified for backup, after hours, when not on campus, or for other contingencies.

<input type="checkbox"/> Phone (Message center)	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct Connect
<input type="checkbox"/> Call Tree	<input type="checkbox"/> School web site	<input type="checkbox"/> Pa
<input type="checkbox"/> Instant Messaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe):	



<b>Essential Function:</b>			
<b>Primary Person</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Second Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email

<b>Essential Function:</b>			
<b>Primary Person</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Second Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email

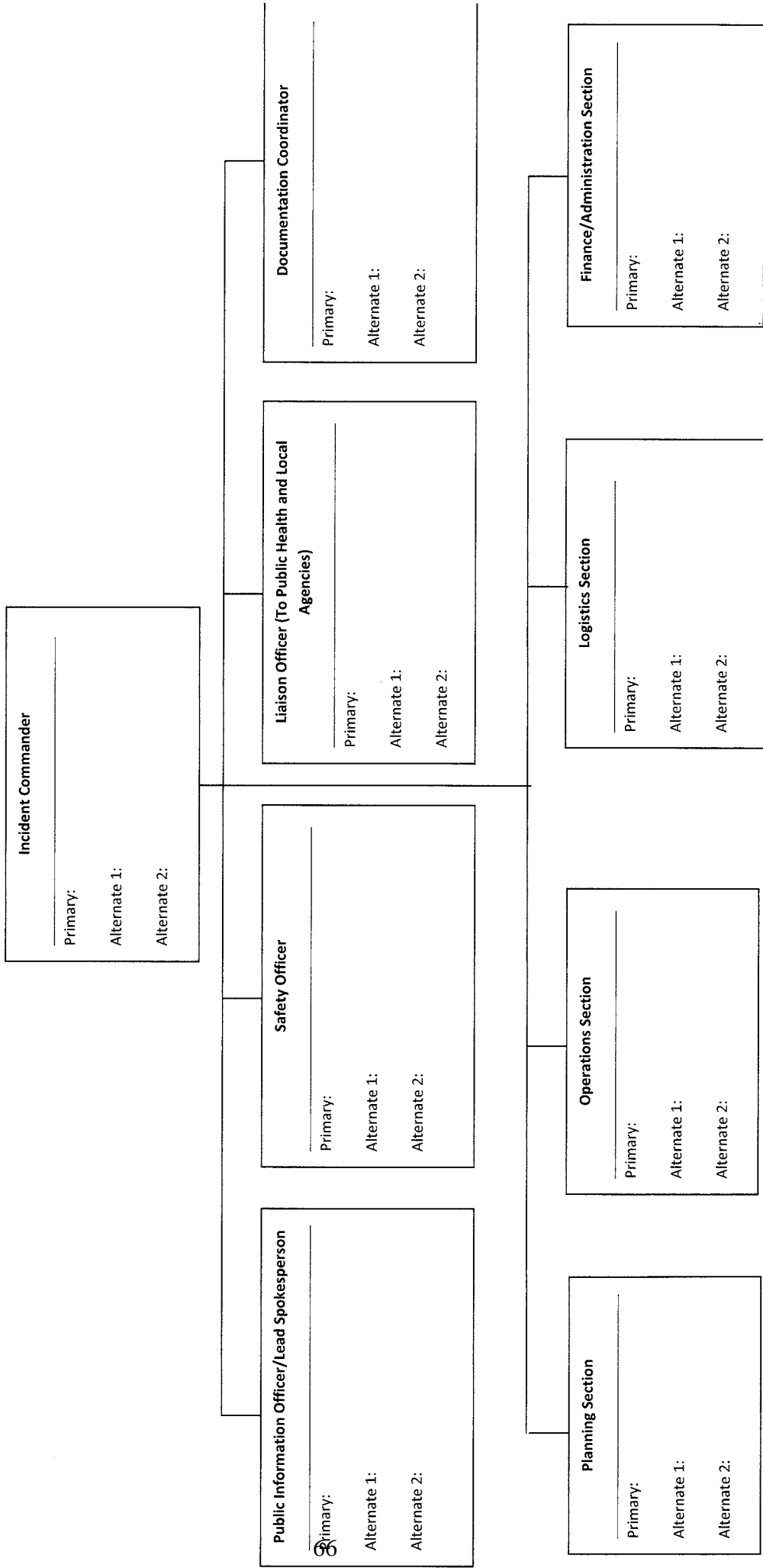
<b>Essential Function:</b>			
<b>Primary Person</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email
<b>Second Alternate</b>	Name		Phone Numbers/ Email

<b>Essential Function:</b>			
<b>Primary Person</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>
<b>Alternate</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>
<b>Second Alternate</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>

<b>Essential Function:</b>			
<b>Primary Person</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>
<b>Alternate</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>
<b>Second Alternate</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Phone Numbers/ Email</b>

## F. Leadership and Alternates:

It may be useful to make an Incident Command Structure, which can also be followed in other types of emergencies or natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, floods, etc.). Explanations for each role, as well as a brief overview of NIMS, are in the ICS review. This is a suggestion for how to structure during an emergency; you may adapt this chart or consolidate roles to best fit your needs. The importance is that all staff members have a clear understanding of functions and responsibilities. Once employees are aware of this and know the school has a plan, their fears will be greatly reduced and they will be more likely to support the school in an emergency.



List the people who can make operational decisions if the head of the school is absent.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Alt. Phone Number</b>
<b>Point of Contact</b>			
<b>Alternate</b>			
<b>Second Alternate</b>			
<b>Alternate 3</b>			

**G. Key Internal Dependencies (Within the schools)**

What functions and services do you depend on? All school districts rely on Energy Services, Tech Support, Payroll/Purchasing/Finance, Public Safety and Facilities Services. List below the other products and services upon which you depend and who provides them. Also add mitigating actions for each or provisions to support these components/dependencies.

	Dependency (Product or Service)	Provided by:	Risks and Mitigating Actions
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

### H. Key External Dependencies

List below the products, services, suppliers and providers upon which you depend that are not part of the overall organization, including your Local Health Jurisdiction and the Department of Emergency Management. We recommend that you encourage them to prepare a pandemic influenza continuity of operations plan and communicate with them regarding your interactions. Also list mitigating actions to minimize the effects of potential loss of these services.

	Dependency (Product or Service)	Provided by:	Risks and Mitigating Actions
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

**Important Contacts:**

Your local health department will be an important liaison in the time of an infectious disease outbreak. Please list the persons whom you will be communicating with. The Local Health Jurisdiction contact persons are listed in the Other Resources section. Also list your mental health providers' contacts, State and local Emergency Management Coordinators (EMC), people at the ESD, and other persons who may be contacted.

Name	Phone Numbers	Email

## **I. Mitigation Strategies**

Considering your dependencies, and essential functions, describe the steps you can take now to minimize the pandemic's impact on your operations. For example, you may wish to stock up on your critical supplies and make suggestions to parents. You may develop contingency work-at-home procedures (Consider alternative teaching methods employed by online classes, mailing assignments home, etc.). Special programs, such as Free or Reduced Meals, should also be considered. This may be the most important step of your emergency planning process. Formulation of your mitigation strategies may require reevaluation of your objectives and functions. Disinfection policies, personal hygiene measures and campaigns can also be put here. (Refer to How to Maintain Operations during a Pandemic (OSHA) and also PPE guidance).


**J. Infection Control Policy and Procedures**

List your infection control policy and procedures. This should take into consideration what can be done before, during, and after to minimize the spread of disease. Examples may include: promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette), encouraging parents to stock up on supplies and to keep children home, Establishing policies and procedures for students and staff for sick leave absences unique to a pandemic influenza (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave), Establish sick leave policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school. (Refer to the Pandemic Response Matrix, and Human Resources Section).


**K. Financial and Official Records Keeping**

How will you keep track of costs during an emergency situation? This should be discussed with your Documentaion Officer.




**M. MOUs and Short Term Insurance Plans**

What short term disability options are you considering for your staff? What MOUs have you made with your external dependencies?


**N. Exercising Your Plan and Informing Your Staff**

Share your completed plan with your staff. Hold exercise to test the plan and maintain awareness. Note below the types of exercise you will use and their scheduled dates. Don't forget to involve your local health department!

- Staff Orientation Meeting
- Call Tree Drill
- Tabletop exercise
- Emergency Communication Test
- Off site information access test
- Unscheduled work at home day
- Emergency assembly drill
- Interdepartmental exercise
- Other drill (Describe):

**O. Recovery After the Pandemic:**

Describe your plan to fully resume operations as soon as possible after the wave has passed. Decontamination will have to occur prior to restarting operations, and education of staff, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will all need to be considered. Also identify and address resumption/scheduling of normal activities and services, work backlog, restocking of inventories, sanitation procedures, and emotional and mental needs, especially if there have been deaths within the school community. Other issues include communicating with staff and regaining trust of families and public. See Recovery Resources, especially section pertaining to Mental Health.

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Difficulties</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions, Protocols</b>

**P. Special Considerations for Your School**

Describe here any additional or unique considerations that you may face in a pandemic or infectious disease outbreak. Some issues might be how to assist matriculating seniors in meeting diploma requirements, provision of child care, and the role of certificated staff.

List the categories of special needs students that you have in your district or school, and the special challenges of continuing to serve them during a pandemic, and your plan for overcoming these strategies.

Challenges	Strategies/Plans

**Q. Additional Policy Summaries**

Please refer to the annexes for more resources, guidelines, and policies to help plan for pandemic influenza.

**Guidelines for Workplace and Fitness to Work:**

During a pandemic, employees will be encouraged to reduce face-to-face contact whenever possible. Increasing the physical distance between people to three to six feet will reduce influenza transmission risk from coughing, sneezing, or speaking, especially when coupled with good hygiene practices.

Employees who are sick should not report to work. Be prepared to implement procedures to reduce the workplace risk of transmitting influenza.

### **Home Emergency Planning for Individuals and Families**

Staff, students and their families should all plan for any type of emergencies that could impact them in their home. Hurricane Katrina taught us that employees may not show up for work if they are concerned for the safety and security of their families. We recommend that you provide information to employees and the families of students regarding pandemic influenza and planning checklists, as well as an Emergency Contacts Form.