

A SAMPLE GUIDE FOR LEADING YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT THROUGH THIS CRISIS

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STAGE 1 – ASSESS THE CHAOS AND DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR RAPID RESPONSES

(approx. Day 1 to Day 14)

STAGE 1

1. Notify school board of steps you are taking within this Stage.
2. See Communication Guide on page 3. (Guide should be used repeatedly throughout each of the four Stages.)
3. Create a central command /rapid response team to manage the chaos.
 - a. Organizational structure considerations: essential staff closest to the immediate work, including curriculum directors, department and grade level chairs, as needed; team leadership responsible for obtaining facts; team facilitation; team members' responsibilities and ownership; etc.
 - b. Operational systems: location of work, communication among team, communication with others, logistics for meetings, etc.
 - c. Mission and strategic actions:
 - i. Identification of students and staff's physiological and safety needs; prioritization; situational assessment; rapid responses; dissemination of information and resources, etc.
 - ii. Anticipation of secondary crises (i.e. illness of essential staff, lack of resources, legal challenges, etc.). Identification and execution of proactive actions.
 - iii. Identification of needs of parents, community, and partners; prioritization; and dissemination of information and resources, etc.
4. Assess effectiveness of central command structure, systems and actions.
5. Network with job-alike colleagues to share best practices.

STAGE 2 – ASSESS THE CHAOS, AND ANALYZE AND ENHANCE RESPONSES (approx. Day 5 – 30, may overlap Stages 1 & 3)

STAGE 2

This Guide is based upon the References (page 3), as well as my professional experiences, including my observation of the excellent leadership occurring among our Pennsylvania superintendents and their teams.

1. Repeat Stage 1, steps 1, 2, 4 & 5.
2. Add teaching and learning needs and resources to 3ci. "Mission and strategic actions."
3. Acknowledge short term wins and means for sharing best practices within groups (i.e. principals, grade level teachers, etc.).
4. As a team and individually, strive for adaptability, innovation, collaboration, and growth.
5. Consider establishment of second central command team to begin actions within Stage 4. Include essential members of first central command team, in addition to those closest to the work (i.e. teacher leaders, parent reps) that will occur in Stage 4.

STAGE 3 – ANALYZE THE RESPONSE, PIVOT AND ADAPT AS NECESSARY (approx. Day 10 – Day 60, may overlap Stages 2 and 4)

STAGE 3

1. Repeat Stage 2, steps 1, 2, 3, and 4.
2. Identify unrealistic expectations occurring withing groups (staff, parents, school board, community, partners, etc.), and address.
3. Identify potential problems that could occur long term (social distancing next school year, parents homeschooling students, students enrolling in cyber schools, etc.).
4. Establish a second central command team. (See Stage 2 step 5 and Stage 4.)

STAGE 4 – PLAN FOR THE FUTURE (approx. Day 45 and beyond, may overlap stage 3)

STAGE 4

1. Repeat Stage 3, steps 1, 2, and 3.
2. Facilitate second central command team to plan for the future.
 - a. Organizational structure: leadership, facilitator, membership, responsibilities, and ownership, etc.
 - b. Operational systems: location of work, communication among team, communication with others, logistics for meetings, etc.
 - c. Mission and strategic actions.
 - i. Lead and support the growth of an adaptable culture.
 - ii. Identify fears/concerns for the long term.
 - iii. Identify prior structures, systems, processes, strategies, etc. to STOP, CONTINUE, and START, if students are able to return to school next year.
 - iv. Identify prior structures, systems, processes, strategies, etc. to STOP, CONTINUE, and START, if students are not able to return to school next year.
 - v. Envision and develop revised model(s) for each scenario.
 - vi. Identify achievable targets for the next school year for each scenario.
3. Celebrate successes.

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COMMUNICATION GUIDE - Implement repeatedly in all Stages

With your central command team identify your groups (students, staff, parents, school board, community, partners, others).

Create your message for each group. Communicate the facts intentionally, simply, clearly, repeatedly, and authentically, admitting what you do not know.

- **Frame the crisis.** What are the **facts and circumstances** surrounding the crisis (seriousness, uncertain duration, etc.)? Because people are experiencing various levels of loss, fear, anger and/or denial, it is important to help them to gain perspective and face reality by addressing the facts and circumstances directly.
- **Consider and describe the impact** of the facts and circumstances on each group. Consider their experiences, frame of mind, and matters important to them. **Identify actions that you and other relevant groups are taking** as a result of the impact.
- **Identify actions that members of each group need to take.** Provide instruction on preparation, delivery, timelines, and follow-up. Communicate clear expectations and provide permission for them to let go of less important matters right now.
- Provide an indication of when each group will hear from you again.

Identify the person(s) on the central command team who is in the best position **to deliver the message to each group.**

REFERENCES

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