

Pandemic Planning: Technology Readiness Indicators

Key principles:

- Readiness should be about preparedness for any disaster, not just a pandemic.
- Technology should support every facet of disaster planning – from development and testing of plans to ensuring continuity of operations during a crisis.
- Technology should facilitate communications during a crisis or pandemic event.
- Schools must work toward integrating their systems with other schools, state emergency management agencies, and other public health entities.

Indicator	Rationale
<p>Capability to electronically transmit student records/transcripts</p>	<p>Policy Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students dislocated from a disaster – be it a Hurricane or pandemic – will often be assigned to other schools. To ensure a seamless transition, the new school needs access to that student’s academic history and transcripts • Similar capabilities are required / encouraged for hospitals in terms of electronic health records. • Supports continuity of operations recommendation number 7 in the National Pandemic Strategy Implementation plan, “identify, protect, and ensure the ready availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, and information systems needed to support essential functions.” http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/federal/pandemic-influenza-implementation.pdf <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katrina demonstrated the urgent need for this disaster response capability after paper-based records were destroyed and schools receiving students had no access to their academic history (http://weather.about.com/od/famoushurricanes/a/schoolkatrina.htm) • News accounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Cybershake/story?id=1129166&page=1 ○ http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,170146,00.html
<p>Availability of online courses through the school and/or through partnerships.</p>	<p>Policy Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During a pandemic, there will be a large number of student absences as well as school closures for an extended period of time. Online courses help minimize the impact on students and ensure continuity of education • Supports CDC’s technical guidance for schools which states that one role of schools is to “be a resource for families to help mitigate the secondary effects of school dismissals by referring them to assistance in the community or, where feasible, by providing direct assistance.” Schools can provide direct assistance through their online education programs or indirect assistance such as courses offered by partners (out of state providers, state virtual schools, etc.).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the National Pandemic Strategy Implementation Plan which encourages districts to use these technologies to ensure continuity of student learning (2.1) (page 186: http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/federal/pandemic-influenza-implementation.pdf) <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hong Kong has implemented this strategy as part of their pandemic preparedness: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5izGZTykz3pvkl1e78h7R0vq5TUxQ Florida Virtual School provided similar services during Katrina: http://www.flvs.net/areas/aboutus/NewsArchives/Documents/Headlines/2005/WSJ.Sept%2005.pdf and here http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/09/21/04katonline.h25.html?tkn=PQZFQcy9OR8GMsE6wFRQ8t9/iYrMeJbzIEsJ Florida Virtual School, APEX Learning, and eCollege provided courses to students in the aftermath of Katrina: http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/katrina/students/molli.htm
<p>Website capabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to quickly publish information to the web. Ability to broadcast emergency messages to teachers, students, and parents through email, SMS, and other technologies (preferably integrated with state and federal Emergency Alert Systems) Online collaboration tools to help facilitate planning and response for teachers and administrators. Remote hosting with disaster recovery services. 	<p>Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support CDC’s technical guidance recommending that schools have a process for regular input and collaboration on decisions http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/school/k12techreport.html Supports the National Pandemic Strategy Implementation Plan which encourages districts to use these technologies as part of school closures (2.2; 4.1-10). (page 186 http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/federal/pandemic-influenza-implementation.pdf) Supports broader homeland security, integrated electronic alert system initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPAWS: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/ipaws/systemenhancements.shtm CRS Report: http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL32527_20051003.pdf Importance of these alert systems was a key lesson learned following the Virginia Tech shootings: http://chronicle.com/article/Virginia-Tech-s-Text-Message/41948 <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BlackBoard Connect: http://www.blackboard.com/Alert-Notification/Connect-Platform.aspx was used during the recent H1N1 outbreak to send more than 9.5 million messages to students, parents, and teachers. http://www.contingencyplanning.com/articles/72237/ Schoolwires: http://www.schoolwires.com
<p>Capability to electronically report school absences and closures to CDC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports CDC’s school dismissal form: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/dismissal_form/