DISTANCE LEARNING

FULL-TIME IN-PERSON SCHOOL

BIE plans to fully reopen schools for SY 2020/21.

• To the maximum extent possible, students will attend school full-time in a brick and mortar school setting with regular instruction from teachers.

• BIE has implemented comprehensive safety requirements and precautionary measures aligned with CDC and guidance to protect employees and students to the greatest extent possible.

• Although full-time attendance is the optimum, schools will have a range of options for scheduling students, e.g., full-time attendance, rotational schedule with reduced class sizes and reduced number of students in the buildings.

• Local decisions about scheduling students will be made in coordination with tribes, states and local health authorities.

TRANSITIONING TO DISTANCE LEARNING INSTRUCTION

• In cases where schools must close, all students will engage in distance learning with their classroom teachers. (See Alternative Education Plan below for students who do not have the capability for distance learning).

• Schools will be prepared to open classes entirely online if health conditions prevent in-person schools from reopening.

• This option is also for those students who cannot attend the brick and mortar school for health-related reasons.

• For anticipated closures of five days or less, there is no requirement to switch to full-time distance learning. In this scenario, schools will make assignments and resources available for students.

• If a school is aware they will likely be closed for six days or more, schools must prepare to shift to distance learning within three days. Teachers will use existing curriculum resources and other approved resources aligned to the new BIE Standards Assessment and Accountability.
TRANSITIONING A STUDENT TO DISTANCE LEARNING FOR EXTENDED ABSENCES

• If a student becomes ill and will miss more than 10 days of school, the school, in consultation with the student’s parents and guardians, will determine if transitioning the student to distance learning instruction is the best option for a student.

• The school may register students and assist families in understanding their responsibility in supporting their child’s education in this environment.

• The school registrar and school NASIS clerk will maintain a record of their attendance.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN DISTANCE LEARNING

• Schools must provide students with disabilities, including students with 504 Individualized Accommodation Plans (IAPs) plans, pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP), pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with all the services identified in their IAPs and IEPs. Such instruction must be provided through in-person or structured distance learning, with an emphasis on providing in-person instruction, when possible, to this particularly vulnerable population of children.

• If at any time a school is uncertain whether it will be able to comply with a particular student’s IEP or IAP, or otherwise meet its obligations under either IDEA or Section 504, it must immediately notify the Education Resource Center (ERC). The ERC will contact both Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA) and ADD.

• Distance learning is available to all students including those students with disabilities who are, or may be, eligible for either an IEP or IAP.

• Students with a disability may not be denied participation in distance learning because of their disability or because they may need services or because they may need services or accommodations which are typically delivered in person.

• For students seeking distance learning instruction who are or may be eligible for an IEP, their regularly assigned IEP team will convene to develop, review or revise, as necessary, their IEP to ensure that they receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

• The IEP team will develop, implement, and administer the IEP in accordance with IDEA. Distance Learning will not affect any rights, substantive or procedural, guaranteed to a student or parent by the IDEA.

• The IEP team will determine the instruction, services, and/or accommodations necessary to provide a FAPE to a student receiving distance learning instruction.
• Working in concert with DPA, the IEP team will draw from all appropriate resources, both distance and in-person, to serve the student’s needs. A student receiving distance learning instruction, for example, may also have access to related services such as physical, speech, and occupational therapies that may be available from the in-person school.

• The IEP team, in close collaboration with DPA, will also monitor the student’s progress toward the goals and objectives of the IEP to make sure that the student is making meaningful educational progress.

504 IAPs FOR STUDENTS IN DISTANCE LEARNING

• For students seeking distance learning instruction who are, or may be, eligible for an IAP, the regularly assigned Section 504 Team will convene to develop, review and revise, as necessary, the student’s 504 IAP.

• The 504 Team will follow the policies and procedures outlined in the BIE Section 504 National Policy Memorandum and will work with the 504 Coordinator to provide the distance learning and/or physical accommodations necessary for a student with a disability to have access to BIE educational programs and services.

ELIGIBILITY FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

• All families are eligible for distance learning option.

• Families will be asked to commit to supporting their child in the distance learning format.

• Families will be asked if their student needs a WiFi Jetpack and a laptop.

• Distance learning students may participate in the student meal program. Pick up options will be determined by individual schools.

DISTANCE LEARNING SCHOOL SUPERVISION

• Teachers working in a distance learning format will report directly to their school leader.

• Teachers’ duty location will normally be their school of record unless an alternative work location off-site is approved by their supervisor.

• Once permissible based on local conditions, teachers will maintain and return to their position at their school.
PARENTS AND GUARDIANS CHOOSING DISTANCE LEARNING

• Schools should engage regularly and substantively with families in their primary language to ensure that they have accurate and up-to-date information to make informed decisions about whether an in-person or distance learning option is best for their children's return to school.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

School leaders must provide students an alternative education program for students who choose the distance learning option but who do not have the capability for distance learning instruction. The alternative plan should address the following components:

• Curriculum. Use oral, written, taped, other instructional materials that ensure students are on grade level.

• Social-Emotional. Instructional materials and opportunities that support the development of social and emotional skills, including access to school counselors and other professionals.

• Nutrition. Access to healthy meals that support nutritional requirements.

• Physical Activity. Opportunities that support regular physical activity for well-being.

• Accountability. Opportunities to assess student performance, gauge progress, and provide feedback to students and parents/guardians about student progress.

• Contact. Have at least weekly contact with students, e.g., phone calls if possible, to guide instruction, check for understanding, connect students to resources and professionals, provide feedback about student progress, and to discuss other instructional matters. (Note: It is not acceptable to drop off an instructional package with minimal/no contact with the student and family).

TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

• A Technology Package with a Toolkit will be sent out separately from the Return To Learn! Reopening Plan.

• It will include guidance in such areas as: Future Technology Procurements, Instructions on Installation of Devices, Connectivity Instructions to enable Distance Learning and User Support.
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

• Teachers will take daily attendance for students in schools operating in-person as outlined in the school level attendance policies.

• A category for distance learning attendance will be created in NASIS to account for students who are attending school remotely.

• Schools will take special effort to encourage families to keep sick students at home to reduce spread of illness.

GRADING PRINCIPLES

No grading changes are anticipated for this school year. The most important aspect of grading is the feedback teachers provide students and parents/guardians about student progress in mastering the BIE standards.

• To ensure that students are not penalized for circumstances outside of their control, BIE schools may have made adjustments to grading for Quarter 4 of last school year.

• While no similar grading change is anticipated for this school year, this is an excellent opportunity for schools to examine grading practices that emphasize feedback, create multiple opportunities for improvement, and provide authentic performance-based assessments.

• This year may present challenges for students. Teachers and staff must be flexible and creative in assessing student performance and assigning student grades that are a reflection of student performance and not student circumstances.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Following are expectations for each group:

CENTRAL OFFICE

BIE Central Office through the Reopening Task Force will provide the following items and support before the start of the school year:

• A K-12 education school reopening plan providing College and Career Readiness Standard links so teachers can determine the essential standards and pacing of content, including:
  - Essential or priority learning in each content area and pacing of the content in the distance learning environment.
Return to Learn!

- Guidelines for relevant policies.
- Online assessment resources that are available for teacher use.
- Expectations for Special Education, including training on Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and distance learning.

• Standardized performance-based assessments using BIE-approved curriculum resources to the greatest extent possible.

• A full list of distance teaching resources and access information, including a list of social-emotional and trauma informed strategies and resources and professional development opportunities.

• Self-paced professional learning modules provided throughout the year and developed with support from EPAs to support teacher implementation of distance education.

• Training on distance learning instructional learning tools available to teachers.

• Secure digital learning tools with comprehensive support.

• Secure IT help-desk support for students and teachers during regular and after-school hours.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS (EPA)

Before the start of the school year and during the year, EPAs will:

• Communicate expectations for school leaders supporting and supervising teachers in the distance teaching environment, review lesson plans, and ensure teachers are regularly working with and providing feedback to students.

• Deliver training to school leaders that was developed in coordination with ADDs that prepares and supports them in being an effective instructional leader in the distance environment.

• Provide guidance to help school leaders understand what quality synchronous and asynchronous learning and effective feedback to teachers looks like.

• Support school leaders in analyzing data.

• Support school leaders as they guide teachers in differentiated learning for students.

• Support school leaders in overseeing high-quality rigorous instruction in the distance learning environment.
• Provide daily core instructional guidelines to minimize screen fatigue by adhering to best practices for distance learning instructional time frames for elementary, middle, and high school.

**EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER (ERC)**

At the start of the school year, each ERC will:

• Communicate expectations for teaching and learning in the distance teaching environment to include the number of synchronous interactions per week, asynchronous work, lesson plan posting, collaboration, and parent and guardian communications.

• EPAs working with School Improvement Education Specialists will develop exemplar lessons or teachers and support teacher collaborative teams with lesson development to the greatest extent possible.

**SCHOOLS**

At the start of the school year, each school will:

• Update LMS for distance learning with the names of enrolled students and class schedules as well as meet any new course and curricular requirements that must be entered in the LMS.

• Provide a schedule for synchronous instruction and asynchronous work each day by subject to prepare students and families for a possible transition to the distance learning environment.

• Share expectations for teachers to provide regular and predictable opportunities for families and students to connect with them, as timely and specific feedback is critical for student learning.

• Identify student access and passwords to available online resources and curriculum materials.

• Use a plan to support and supervise teachers’ instruction.

• Provide communication tools for parents and guardians (aligned with resources provided by BIE Central Office Communications) about the possibility of schools opening or transitioning in the distance environment, including:
  ■ Expectations for parents and guardians support of student learning, completion of assignments, and communication with teachers.
  ■ Expectations around screen time, synchronous, and asynchronous learning.
School Leaders who directly supervise teachers will provide guidance and templates to use in lesson planning and collaborative planning sessions provided by ERC’s Curriculum and Instruction Specialists:

- Teacher lesson planning framework that highlights which tools are best to use.

- LMS for teachers to work together and share lessons and resources. (This should be an asynchronous platform available for all teachers, which can support teachers in small schools that have fewer opportunities to collaborate with colleagues).

- Instructional materials for use in the Alternative Education Program for students who do not have the capability for distance instruction.

- Schools will provide a community-wide collaborative planning structure to ensure that collaborative planning among teachers continues in the distance environment.

TEACHERS

At the start of the school year and throughout the year, teachers will:

- Use their school distance learning LMS from the beginning of the school year, and maintain use for in-person and distance learning tasks throughout the school year.

- Develop and maintain a plan for transitioning to long-term and short-term distance teaching and learning, including a schedule for live sessions.

- Develop and provide instructional material for the Alternative Education Plan for students not receiving in-person instruction and who do not have the capability to connect to distance learning instruction.

- Use BIE-adopted digital curricular materials regularly for student collaboration to ensure students are prepared for collaboration in a distance learning environment should conditions change.

- Collaborate regularly at scheduled times with colleagues to share teaching practices, engage in collaborative planning, reflect on instructional effectiveness, analyze student work and data, and develop assessments.

- Maintain regular, two-way communication with parents and guardians to ensure families are prepared for a potential transition to distance teaching and learning and are able to receive feedback and support.