WS1: Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

School districts need to review eight main planning considerations during the continuity of operations planning process.

1. Examples of Essential Functions
   a. Transportation of students or evacuees
   b. Communications to both internal and external audiences
   c. Facility use: accessibility of main buildings or alternative locations
   d. Continuity of learning

2. Orders of Succession
   a. Provides for the assumption of senior leadership during an emergency when the incumbents are unable or unavailable to execute their duties
   b. Allows for an orderly and predefined transition of authority

3. Delegations of Authority
   a. Specification of person authorized to make decisions for or act on behalf of the following:
      i. Superintendent of schools and other district leadership, including board members
      ii. School principal and assistant principals
      iii. Other key individuals associated with performance of essential functions
      iv. District and school leadership
   b. Delegation of authority:
      i. Is predetermined
      ii. Is documented in writing
      iii. Specifies at least two alternate authorities
      iv. Addresses training and/or certification requirements
      v. Addresses limitations on the delegated authority

4. Continuity Facilities and Communications
   a. Schools should identify alternative locations other than their normal facilities to carry out essential functions.
   b. Continuity facilities must provide communications to do the following:
      i. Communicate internally with continuity planning team, leadership, and key personnel.
      ii. Communicate with community partners.
      iii. Communicate with the school community, including students, staff, and families.
      iv. Communicate with media.
   c. Ensure connectivity if primary means of communication fails.

5. Vital Records Management
   a. Vital records include electronic and hard-copy documents, references, and records needed to support essential school functions such as emergency operating records, legal and financial records, and student educational records.
   b. Two types of vital records should be included:
      i. Static records change little or not at all over time.
      ii. Active records change constantly with circumstances or as work is completed.

6. Necessary Expectations When the COOP Plan Is Activated
   a. Employees have a clear understanding of what they are supposed to do in an emergency.
   b. Students and families have a clear understanding for the continuity of learning expectations.
   c. Accommodations and modifications for employees with disabilities and special needs are identified and provided.
   d. Services necessary for students with IEPs are identified and provided during prolonged school dismissal.
   e. Students eligible for medical and food services are provided with continued services.
   f. Staff with “essential function” responsibilities are trained in advance and are kept continually informed.
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

g. All staff are kept informed during a COOP event regarding expectations for work.
h. Leaders account for all staff members.

7. Devolution of Control and Direction. The capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions, and a way of ensuring a COOP capability in the event COOP personnel are unable to perform their mission or if the continuity facility is unavailable to support it.

8. Reconstitution Operations. The process by which teachers, staff, and ultimately students resume normal operations and restore the learning environment.