

## Virtual School Solution for Emergency Pandemic Closures

Educational Options and the non-profit Educational Options Foundation are committed to working with you, our valued clients, to implement a pandemic recovery program to insure students can continue their education if your school is closed due to a flu pandemic or other disaster. As your partners in education, we are dedicated to student success and can be counted on to help your school during times of need or disaster. Through a grant from the Educational Options Foundation, this emergency program is being provided at no cost for every client school. Additionally, as a current client with a trained system administrator, implementation should be relatively straightforward.

### What does the Emergency School Closure Program provide?

- Allows a school to enroll every current student in online courses for the duration of a school closure due to a pandemic or other natural disaster.
- Allows a rapid transition from a traditional brick and mortar school to an online school.
- Ensures continuity of learning: books and study materials are online.
- Provides a reliable communication system between the administration, teachers and student body.

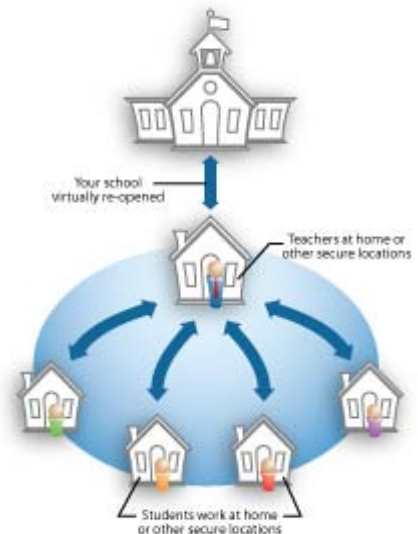
EdOptions stands ready to help schools prepare, respond, and recover from a flu pandemic or any other disaster that may require your school to close. Our program is a collaboration between your school or district and EdOptions to provide a pre-planned, continuously updated School Closure Response Plan that will allow a school to re-open “virtually” within 24 hours of any closure.

In case of a pandemic or other disaster, students can continue classes from home or any secure location with an Internet connection. Each registered student receives an email account for direct or mass communication with the entire student body. Web-based teachers from across the district, state, or country can be used to continue the educational process until schools can re-open.

### How does it work?

Implementation requires three easy steps.

1. Planning Phase → A new emergency virtual school site is established; all teachers complete the 25 minute online system tutorial; and student, teacher, and course information are pre-loaded into a data file. As a current client, many teachers and program administrators are already trained.
2. Response Phase → The online school is activated, and students are provided with login information. Students would continue to work with their teachers in the virtual school. In the case of a large, but regionally focused disaster such as a hurricane, additional trained teachers from outside the disaster area could be added as adjunct instructors if needed.



3. Recovery Phase → As students return to school, they can continue to work on the web-based courses as they transition back into the regular classroom.

### **What do you get?**

Using this model, your school maintains control of the student-teacher relationship. An emergency communication system is in place, and your students can stay on task and meet your requirement of mastering a rigorous and complete course of study. Additionally, should an extended closure result from a hurricane or other major disaster, this emergency virtual school should allow your school to continue receiving your state student funding since your students and facility would continue with all their class activities online. It will also facilitate reconstituting your student body when school reopens.

As previously stated, since you are a current client, there is no additional cost to participate in this emergency program. All training is provided online for teachers that are not familiar with our system. Also, as a current client, your school already has a number of trained teachers that can assist faculty new to the Stars Suite™ software.

### **Why do we understand?**

It is important that we prepare schools for every emergency. As a Hurricane Andrew survivor, I experienced firsthand the immediate destruction and long-term effect on my community, especially for my own school age children. Many families did not return to the community, and schools remained closed for long periods of time. This pandemic recovery program was developed in response to my experience.

Unfortunately, the current flu crisis appears to be spreading rapidly. We recommend you begin the first step in establishing a “quarantine ready” emergency school plan as soon as possible. First, have every teacher go to our online training site and complete the 25 minute system tutorial. Next, have your system administrator contact the EdOptions Help Desk so that a new school virtual site can be set up, and we can assist pre-loading all teacher and student data. The final step, if a school closure appears imminent, will be to create each teacher’s class roster and populate it with their current students. Before the school actually closes, each student would be provided their individual password and given simple instructions on how to access their classes and interact with their teachers online.

We strongly urge you to take advantage of this grant from our Foundation. It is anticipated that a flu pandemic school closing would not last more than two weeks, but as the end of the school year approaches with finals and end of year activities, any closure may be at a very critical time.

This grant allows full activation until the end of this school year as well as any future disaster that may require school closure up to four weeks. There is no cost now or in the future or any time limit for establishing and maintaining the emergency virtual school site. The four week limit (which we anticipate will be more than enough time) applies only to the actual activation and usage of the site by students. If a disaster requires continued usage beyond four weeks, the Educational Options Foundation will consider each case individually and anticipates extending the usage with an additional grant.

It appears there is no time to lose. Please call us to get your plan started today.

Educational Options Foundation & Educational Options, Inc.  
Your Partners in Education

### **Thomas E. Sawner, Ed.D.**

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