

Exhibit 10: Level of Government Responsible for Decision-Making During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Reported by National Research Coordinators

Country	Closing Schools	Format of Remote Instruction	Reopening Schools	Description of Overlapping or Separation of Responsibilities
Albania	National	National	National	All decisions were made by the Ministry responsible for education.
Australia	State/Provincial	Individual Schools	State/Provincial	In most cases, longer-term closures that were related to lockdowns were at the instruction of state government authorities, although these may not have applied to all schools within that state (i.e., a distinction may have been made between urban and regional areas in terms of the length of closures and timing of reopening). Individual schools may have made decisions to close (short-term) for deep cleaning or in response to infection in the school community.
Austria	National	Individual Schools	National	Regulations about closing and reopening schools are prescribed/mandated at a national level by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. These regulations depend on the COVID-19 infection and risk position, as well as on specific local incidence rates and the need for school or class level closings due to COVID-19 cases. As a result, at school level it is less a decision that is made than a reaction to the course of the pandemic and the associated regulations. The education directorates of the federal states act as interfaces between the federal government and schools. Decisions about remote instruction were made by individual classes/teachers. There are no general statements how students in the primary grades should be instructed when not at school.
Azerbaijan	National	National	National	During the COVID-19 pandemic, the schools organized their activities in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers and the measures taken by the Ministry of Education. However, face-to-face instruction in educational institutions is provided on a voluntary basis. Parents had a choice about sending their children to the school or having them attend online classes. The regular work schedule at school was determined by the educational institution on the basis of its capacity and the number of available students.
Bahrain	National	National	National	Decisions were made at a national level by the National Task Force for Combatting the Corona Virus (COVID-19) according to the health status in the country and the best interest of the students and the nation. Only private schools had the autonomy to make decisions about the format of remote instruction with the approval and supervision of the Ministry of Education.
Belgium (Flemish)	National	Individual Schools	National	The Flemish government decided whether and when schools closed based on the national infection rates. All schools closed for 9 weeks (including a two-week holiday) in the spring of 2020 (followed by partial reopening), one week in the autumn of 2020 and one week in the spring of 2021. Outside of these periods, schools were encouraged to stay open as much as possible, but individual schools were allowed to decide upon additional school or class level closures when there was a local outbreak. During the first three weeks of national school closures, only refresher assignments were allowed if schools chose to offer remote instruction. During the subsequent weeks, remote instruction was still not required but very much encouraged. This also goes for periods when individual schools closed. The format of remote instruction was always the decision of the individual school.
Belgium (French)	National	State/Provincial	National	-
Brazil	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	In general, public and private schools followed the decisions of governors. Even if there were many occurrences of cases of COVID-19 in a given public school, the principal does not choose to open or close the school.

A dash (-) indicates data not provided.

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Bulgaria	Local	Individual Schools	Local	General recommendations for opening and closing educational institutions are taken on national level by the Minister of Education following the prescriptions given by the Ministry of Health. In case of no national lockdown, decisions for closing/opening schools are taken on local/school level depending the level of infection in the region/school.
Canada	State/Provincial	Local	State/Provincial	Varies by province/territory. In general, provinces/territories worked together with the local public health units to make decisions about school opening/closures. Local boards could use their own discretion for closures when local outbreaks occurred. The format of remote instruction varied by province/territory. Some provinces/territories prescribed a format, while some left these decisions to local boards/school authorities.
Chinese Taipei	National	State/Provincial	National	All primary schools remained open before May 13, 2021, which is the last PIRLS 2021 testing date. Ministry of Education issued School Closure Standards, which Central Epidemic Command Center (CDC) agreed. School closure and reopening follow the standards nationally. If one teacher or one student in a class was classified as a confirmed case by the Central Epidemic Command Center, and the class was suspended for 14 days. A school with 2 or more teachers or students listed as confirmed cases by the Central Epidemic Command Center will be closed for 14 days. The urban/township area has one-third of all schools closed. All schools in the area are closed. The municipalities and counties (cities) set up their own principles for remote instruction; the format may vary school by school.
Croatia	Local	Local	Local	The national government was responsible for these decisions in the 2019–2020 school year and shifted to local authorities in the 2020–2021 school year.
Cyprus	National	National	National	All decisions regarding the pandemic (closing of schools, online instruction, reopening of schools) were centrally made by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth following the governmental decisions about the COVID-19 pandemic management protocols.
Czech Republic	National	Individual Schools	National	In August 2020, the government approved an Amendment to the Education Act, which legislatively confirms distance education as an equivalent form of education. This is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, due to which schools were closed from mid-March until June. Attendance in distance learning was recommended but not compulsory. In crisis situations (not necessarily caused by COVID-19) or during the closure of schools by decision of the Ministry of Health or the Regional Hygiene Station, children of the last year in nursery schools (ISCED 0), pupils and students (ISCED 1, 2, and 3) are now obliged to attend distance learning as part of regular schooling.
Denmark	National	Local	National	Danish schools were centrally shut down two times during the pandemic. The first shutdown was from March 19, 2020 to April 13, 2020. The second shutdown was from December 21, 2020 to February 5, 2021. Distance learning was offered during both shutdowns, but was more robust during the second shutdown. Since February 2021, individual schools have closed in response to local outbreaks of COVID-19.
Egypt	National	National	National	There is no overlapping of decision-making responsibilities among different levels of government.
England	National	National	National	The direction for remote instruction applies to all public schools, while independent schools are only required to adhere to the direction for students whose places at independent schools are state-funded.

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Finland	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	In spring 2020, all schools followed the same protocols. All Grade 4 students had distance learning. Starting in autumn 2020, school practices varied based on the COVID-19 situation in each area. Schools followed the recommendations of Regional State Administrative Agency (6 regions). In some areas (mostly the Helsinki metropolitan area) all the schools were closed at some point (e.g. January–February 2021), but in other areas, individual schools closed or students from particular classes participated in distance learning for short time periods (1 or 2 weeks).
France	National	Individual Schools	National	The Ministry of Education is in charge of decisions regarding the closure or reopening of schools in the country. The times of closure have been different depending on the part of the world concerned (metropolitan France, Reunion Island [Indian Ocean], West Indies, French Guyana) and the impact of the pandemic in these regions. Outside of the school closure periods, there were rules for closing classes impacted by the pandemic established by the Ministry and implemented locally by the schools themselves (e.g. closing the class for 1 week if a case of COVID-19 is declared).
Georgia	National	National	National	–
Germany	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	On March 28, 2020, Germany declared that the COVID-19 outbreak had pandemic status of national significance. By resolution of the German Bundestag, this special status ended on November 25, 2021. Federation and states worked together to compile, structure, and implement pandemic countermeasures, based on the German Infection Protection Act. Furthermore, regional adaptations of these measures were introduced, as pandemic events varied significantly by region. For some citizen groups, special countermeasures and rules were implemented as well. For example, attending classes was made mandatory for fourth graders whenever the pandemic events allowed as these students attend the first graduating class in Germany. The concrete realization of the suggested format of remote instruction during instructional time depended strongly on local school and home resources and therefore also differed locally within a federal state.
Hong Kong SAR	Local	Individual Schools	Local	The Education Bureau (EDB) governed all major school closures and reopenings and recommended virtual learning strategies to schools. The EDB also provided learning materials to students and resources for schools and parents. School administrators and teachers made specific plans for remote instruction based on the technology infrastructure of the school, availability of digital devices, and human resources.
Hungary	National	National	National	The state decides to close schools. If there is an infected child in a class, the school will report it to the Epidemiology Center, where the students in the class will be instructed to be educated at home and, if necessary, quarantined.
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	The Ministry of Education sets the conditions for closing/reopening schools and provinces make decisions according to these conditions. Even within the provinces, schools may operate according to their facilities and number of students.

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Ireland	National	Individual Schools	National	The closure of schools from March to June 2020 and from January to March 2021 was decided nationally, as was the reopening of schools from September 2020 and from March 2021. Individual schools were advised to close based on public health advice at other times, due to COVID-19 outbreaks. Schools were instructed not to close individually unless they received specific advice from the Health Service Executive - Public Health (HSE) to do so. The extent to which the format of remote instruction was nationally mandated increased over time. The Department of Education provided guidance, while the Professional Development Service for Teachers, the National Council for Special Education and local Education Centres also provided a range of supports to help schools to navigate the online/remote teaching and learning environment.
Israel	National	National	National	Decisions regarding the closing and reopening of schools was made at the national level. The format of remote instruction was delineated at the national level, but local authorities were later given some autonomy within the guidelines and criteria set by the Ministry of Education.
Italy	National	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	The lockdown period and the closure of all schools (or at least schools in specific regions at high pandemic risk) were decided at the national level. National guidance was also provided on the methods and procedures for reopening schools: safety measures, distancing and separate desks, maximum classroom capacity. At the regional level, depending on the "color" of the local COVID-19 infection situation (from "red" = very high infection level, to "white" = safe situation), decisions were made to reopen or keep schools closed. Individual schools applied the general indications for reopening as they could and they established timetables (also in shifts) and/or the splitting of class groups based on available resources/spaces and the number of enrolled students and classroom capacity. This has meant that many schools have had to reduce their daily teaching hours.
Jordan	National	National	National	Decisions regarding closing and reopening schools are made at the national level by the Ministry of Education. For remote instruction, some private schools have their own website other than the Ministry of Education website for instruction.
Kazakhstan	National	National	National	The decisions on opening or closing schools and the format of instruction are made by the Ministry of Education and Science in accordance with the Ministry of Health. The local authorities can make certain decisions based on the pandemic situation in the region.
Kosovo	National	National	National	Decisions were made by the central government in cooperation with local officials and school principals.
Latvia	National	Individual Schools	Local	-
Lithuania	National	National	National	Decisions to suspend, restrict, or open educational activities were made by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania ordinances. The rules of how work/study could proceed with certain restriction was released by the state-level emergency manager. When quarantine was local, certain restrictions could be determined by local government. Schools could have made decisions about the mode of infection control for a certain class, if needed.
Macao SAR	National	Individual Schools	National	During the COVID-19 pandemic, all decisions about school closing and reopening are made by the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) according to the epidemic prevention policies and instructions of the Health Bureau of Macao SAR government (SSM).

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Malta	National	Individual Schools	National	While decisions on the closure/reopening of schools were taken nationwide by the health authorities, the format of remote instruction differed between schools. Whereas state schools physically reopened for all students during the 2020–2021 school year, due to health and safety mitigation measures some non-state schools provided schedules of when students could attend physically at school and when to follow lessons virtually. All students who, for any reason, could not physically attend school were able to follow their class virtually and synchronously.
Montenegro	National	National	National	The Montenegrin government made all decisions regarding closing and reopening schools, as well as remote instruction.
Morocco	National	National	National	During the COVID-19 pandemic most decisions were made at the national level by the Ministry of Interior on the basis of the National Scientific Commission's daily or at times weekly reports, but sometimes regional decisions were made depending on the pandemic situation locally (such as the number of cases).
Netherlands	National	Individual Schools	National	Decisions on closing and reopening schools were made by the government on a national level. Decisions about the format of remote instruction was made by individual schools; there were no official guidelines.
New Zealand	National	Individual Schools	National	The New Zealand Government introduced a 4-tiered Alert Level system in March 2020, just days before it declared a State of National Emergency and the country moved to the highest Alert Level 4. This resulted in the entire country going into a full lockdown from March 26, 2020. Through its Ministerial-led COVID-19 Response, all schools followed the Government's instructions to close in accordance with the alert system. As well as setting out the requirements for closing, the alert level system set out the conditions for when schools could reopen for instruction, with the Government setting the opening dates. After moving from Level 4 to Level 3, schools were able to reopen to accommodate children who could not learn from home. The alert system was used regionally later in 2020 and in early 2021 before moving to a "traffic light system" in December 2021.
North Macedonia	National	National	National	During the COVID-19 pandemic, all schools with Grade 4 students were closed, reopened, and had remote instruction based upon decisions on national level made by Ministry of Education and Science. The only exceptions were allowed for small number of schools that did not meet minimum requirements for remote instruction. Most of them were small rural schools (or classes) with poor internet connection or students from economically deprived families that did not have minimum technical equipment for remote instruction. The exceptions were made only if the schools requested them and the Ministry approved that the requests were justified.
Northern Ireland	National	Individual Schools	National	The Northern Ireland Executive made decisions regarding the general opening and closing of all schools across Northern Ireland. In addition, individual schools may have had to close for short periods due to an outbreak of COVID-19 cases within the schools. The Northern Ireland Department of Education provided system level advice and guidance on the delivery of remote learning, including key principles of effective practice. A wide range of other resources, guidance and materials, training and support were also provided through the Department of Education's Continuity of Learning Project. Schools were legally required to provide remote learning and have due regard to departmental guidance. There was an expectation that schools would engage with pupils through appropriate digital platforms to allow for regular contact and ensure ongoing interaction, assessment and timely feedback. The Department, however, recognized that different methods of delivery may be required dependent on the age and needs of pupils. There was not, therefore, a prescribed standard format for remote learning.

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Norway (5)	National	Local	National	National authorities developed a differentiated model ("traffic lights") that made it possible to keep schools open with varying degrees of infection pressure.
Oman	National	National	National	A national committee was responsible for making most decisions. Less populated areas in Governates with fewer COVID-19 cases and less internet access were permitted to make different decisions regarding in-person learning, but had to implement safety protocols.
Poland	National	Individual Schools	National	The decisions about school closures and reopening all schools nationwide were made at national level. Furthermore, regional adaptations of these measures were introduced, as pandemic events varied by region. Starting in October 2021 rules for closing classes impacted by the pandemic were established by the government and implemented locally by the schools themselves. The format of remote instruction was also recommended at the national level. However, the format the national government encouraged was not available for every school so schools made decisions individually about what format to implement.
Portugal	National	National	National	In the schools from Azores and Madeira, the responsibility for making decisions for schools with fourth grade students during the COVID-19 pandemic concerning closing, remote instructions and reopening schools lies with the regional governments of each island that have the autonomy for management of educational system.
Qatar	National	National	National	–
Russian Federation	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	Every state had its own decision-making responsibilities and made decisions based on statistics of infection rates in each state.
Saudi Arabia	National	National	National	Decision-making for closing and reopening was centralized during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Serbia	National	National	National	Earlier, the decision about closing the schools was only made at the national level. In the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, decision-making power about closing the schools was partially transferred to local governments.
Singapore	National	Individual Schools	National	Singapore's COVID-19 Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) directs the national whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 outbreak, coordinates the community response to protect Singaporeans, ensures people stay vigilant and safe, and works with the international community to respond to the outbreak. The decision for schools to move to full home-based learning and schools' subsequent reopening was made at the government level and announced by the MTF. For greater flexibility and responsiveness to local needs, schools made local decisions on the actual organization of the remote instruction for their students, such as the format (e.g., synchronous or asynchronous), schedule and structure, within the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and the MTF.
Slovak Republic	National	Individual Schools	National	The decision to close schools was made by the Ministry of Education for all schools with fourth grade students. Terms of reopening of schools were set up by the Ministry of Education in light of the pandemic situation in each respective region of the country.
Slovenia	National	Individual Schools	National	During the COVID-19 era, when schools were/are reopened, some classes or even the entire school can close. The format of remote instructions was set nationally as several recommendations, however, the actual implementation of it was the responsibility of schools.

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South Africa	National	Individual Schools	National	At the national level, the Minister of Basic Education announced school openings and closures. All schools had to adhere to these opening and closing dates and individual schools had to devise plans to ensure curriculum delivery from home and with online support from teachers. So, for example, when South Africa went in a hard lockdown in March 2020, where possible, schools switched to a complete online mode of teaching and learning. As the restrictions were eased by government, schools made decisions about students attending on a rotational basis to reduce numbers of people who are in physical contact, rotational class rosters or relying still on online modes of curricular delivery.
Spain	State/Provincial	Individual Schools	State/Provincial	The government issues general guidelines that were negotiated with the different regions and adapted to their specific needs. Regarding instruction, school centers have autonomy to manage their resources and teachers to choose the methodology of their instruction.
Sweden	National	Individual Schools	National	The majority of students in Grades 1–6 went to schools that were open during the 2020–2021 school year. This was decided on a national level. In August 2020, schools were given some autonomy in deciding when to use remote instruction, but this was directed mainly to ISCED 2 and 3. In some cases, a few individual schools in ISCED 1 were closed for a brief time because of local outbreaks of COVID-19. This was decided on a local level.
Türkiye	National	National	National	Decisions can be made both nationally and locally.
United Arab Emirates	National	National	National	COVID-19 policies implemented in each educational authority were aligned to the federal policy.
United States	State/Provincial	Local	State/Provincial	There was no COVID-19 related decision-making at the national level in the United States. The closing and reopening of schools varied by state and within some states, the districts and schools played a role in the decisions. The national and state levels provided broad guidelines, and school districts and individual schools made more specific guidelines for their state requirements.
Uzbekistan	Local	Local	Local	The government of Uzbekistan announced the closure of all schools beginning on March 18, 2020. Schools would gradually reopen during the fall of 2020, allowing discretion to families to decide whether they would send their children back to school. The reference period of school disruption in Uzbekistan lasted for 8 months. Local authorities make decisions about closing schools, format of remote instruction, and reopening schools taking into account governmental guidelines.
Benchmarking Participants				
Ontario, Canada	State/Provincial	Individual Schools	State/Provincial	All schools were expected to follow guidance outlined in the provincial "COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021–2022);" however, local public health units may require additional or enhanced health and safety measures based on local experience and data. Medical officers of health in local public health units also have statutory powers under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, which they may use to address outbreaks or risks of COVID-19 transmission in schools. As such, school boards, working with their local public health unit, can introduce additional measures.
Quebec, Canada	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	State/Provincial	–
Moscow City, Russian Federation	Local	State/Provincial	Local	Decisions on the functioning of schools during the pandemic and on restrictive measures were taken by each region of the Russian Federation in accordance with the situation. In Moscow, the dates for closing and opening schools and the introduction of distance learning format was regulated by the decrees of the Mayor of Moscow City.
Abu Dhabi, UAE	Same as United Arab Emirates			

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Dubai, UAE	State/Provincial	Individual Schools	State/Provincial	Choice of teaching mode was given to schools in accordance with standards and protocols of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority. Parents had a choice about sending their children to school or having them attend online classes. Schools stayed open as much as possible and closed only when there was a COVID-19 outbreak. Individual schools reported these outbreaks to the Authority and remote instruction was encouraged in these cases, but the format was determined by individual schools. If a child in a class was diagnosed with COVID-19, this was reported to the Authority and that particular class temporarily participated in remote instruction.