

Dear guests and organizers,

First of all, I would like to thank you on behalf of Cyprus Turkish Teachers Trade Union for inviting us to such an interesting event. I am very excited to share our approach and also looking forward to hear from the rest of the speakers.

In general we have a three legged approach to the current crisis we are facing. Today, I am only going to talk about one, the education systems and schools in the post covid era.

KTOS prepared a guide for the reopening of the schools after Covid-19 and included all the stakeholders such as general public/parents, students and teachers.

These are some of the recommendations we are making:

For the Benefit of General Public/Parents;

1. Ministry of Education should take into account the high benefit of the children and the public health while taking the reopening decision. In addition, ministry needs to make benefit and risk analysis in terms of education, public health and socio-economic factors.
2. Ministry of Education should be transparent and should constantly update the society regarding the reopening of schools.
3. A specific platform needs to be established to facilitate cooperation between parents and schools to support the continuation of education at home.
4. In case of reopening of schools, an informative guide should be published for the families to help them directing their children to follow the new school rules.

For the Benefit of Children;

1. Necessary conditions should be created regarding schools to earn the trust of the families and children
2. Orientation period should be inclusive and should consist multilingual and multicultural aspects.
3. Assessment and evaluation approach should be applied to identify the education targets that could not be achieved during the pandemic.
4. Overcoming inequalities emerged due to the pandemic.
5. Taking measures for abuses and neglects may have been occurred during the pandemic.
6. New programmes should be planned for children to adapt them to the new social structure.

For the Benefit of Education Practices;

1. Need to form a 'Consultative Committee on Education and Science'.
2. Organizing teacher/student orientation and ensuring their readiness for school environment.
3. Focusing on parent education.

For the Benefit of Education Programmes;

1. Re-gathering the commissions that develop education programmes.

2. Updating the education programmes.
3. Taking into account the learning outputs achieved during pandemic and allocating necessary time within the new academic year to cover the learning losses of the previous term.
4. Commissions' recommendation should be taken into consideration for the intense education that will be delivered for the education losses.

For the Benefit of School Safety;

1. Schools' should be physically rearranged on the base of the international standards.
2. Classroom setups should be redesigned as leaving 2 meters distance between each seat and allowing 2,5 square meters space for each student.  
  
/Design of classroom arrangement should be at least 2 meters between each students' seat. Every student's seat placement should be in 2,5 meters square.
3. Required health, hygiene and safety kits should be provided to schools.
4. A handbook should be prepared to teach children the social distance and hygiene rules.
5. A safe environment should be provided in school busses.
6. Additional teachers and educational personnel should be employed in schools, if needed.

For the Benefit of Distance Learning;

1. Additional budget should be allocated for the distance education, by taking into consideration the possibility of the second wave of pandemic.
2. Distance learning practices should be accessible, multicultural, multilingual and inclusive.
3. The necessary infrastructure investment should be made to schools for online education, while providing tablet and internet access to the students.
4. In-service trainings should be provided for teachers to adopt interactive education, enhance their communication skills and able to prepare video/simulation - based content as a distance teaching method.
5. Long term agreements should be made for the use of software programmes like adobe captivate, articulate 360, h5p, in order to produce simulation – based content.
6. Distance education should be addressed within the system approach and learning management system should be formed under the roof of the ministry.
7. Digital assessment and evaluation system should be developed and digital education materials should be created.
8. Ministry of Education should establish distance education institute or collaborate with the universities.

For the Benefit of Civil Society;

1. Ministry of Education should collaborate with education trade unions.
2. Education faculties should have an active role during this period.

In short:

\* There is the necessity of establishing a 'Consultative committee on education and science'.

\*Ministry of Education need to be transparent about reopening of schools and update information.

\*Guide for the parents about measures in schools.

\*Guide for setting an environment with social distance, hygienic rules, school safety and health.

\*Update of the education programmes and preparation of programmes by taking into account the pandemic.

\*Providing orientation program for teachers/students and supporting their socio-psychological readiness. New programmes should be planned for children to adapt them to the new social structure.

\* Physical arrangement of schools in the base of international standards. Design of classroom arrangement should be at least 2 meters between each students' seat. Every student's seat placement should be in 2,5 meters square.

\* Necessary health, hygiene and safety kits should provide to schools.

\*Prepare guide for social distance, hygiene and child safety in school busses.

\*In case of need employment of additional teachers and educational personnel.

\*Additional budget for the distance education period, online education infrastructure, for the socio – economic disadvantaged students provide tablet and internet accessibility. Establishment training unit for the management of teachers to build interactive education, enhance their communication skills and prepare video/simulation - based content as a distance teaching method.

\* Ministry of Education collaborate with education trade unions and education faculties.

It is also very important to look at the applied methods and practices in other countries to be able to come up with the best local practice. We believe that the three models or combination of them would be applicable in Cyprus.

### **1. Double Shift Schooling Method**

\*Separation of the classes into two groups.

\* First group comes to school in the morning and other group comes after the first group's education time ends.

- \*Everyday, each student should be brought to the school by the same parent/person. \*
- \* School staff measures the temperature of all students and each student enters into school after their hands and shoes are disinfected.

## **2. 3/2 Schooling Method**

- \*Each classroom is separated into two groups as group 1 and group 2.
- \*Group 1 comes to school on Monday – Wednesday
- \*Group 2 comes to school on Tuesday – Thursday
- \*Every week one of the groups come to school on Friday rotationally.
- \*Timetable is same as usual, only break time is 10 minutes less.
- \*Student's entrances and exits should be from the same gate.

## **3. Morning Division Schooling Method**

- \*Each classroom is divided into two as group 1 and group 2. Duration of the lessons are shorter and school ends at midday.

## **Our evaluation**

It is necessary to work on these three programmes and evaluate advantages and disadvantages of them. When we consider climate conditions, increasing corona virus cases, working conditions, health and safety conditions, practicality of education programmes, social distance rules, transportations risks, with distance education, support 3/2 education programme method's practicality will be easier and safer.

## **Points to Take Into Consideration:**

A guide related to reopening of schools should be published.

Health, safety, hygiene and social distance rules should determined.

Preparing a guide for the families.

In-service training should be organized related to the guide.

Cleaning and health kits should be provided before opening of the schools.

Health and safety measures should taking related to transportation.

Education programme should not be intensive and teachers should follow a flexible programme.

Distance education unit should make an investment for the simulation content teacher/student education.

Schools with high population should follow different education duration, while schools with standard population can follow determined academic calendar.

Measures should be taken for the teachers and students who are in the risk groups.

Every school should prepare and follow their own plan.

During the autumn and winter, entrance and leaving times to schools should be rearrange as considered daylight and climate conditions.

Before concluding my speech, I would like to briefly inform you about our recent survey. KTÖS (Cyprus Turkish Teachers' Trade Union) conducted a research themed "general situation of basic education, education during the pandemic, new academic period and alternative education practices" and 1000 interviewee answered specific designated questions. As a result of the study, teachers and general public shared their own opinion about new normal in the new education period. These results are very important on to take into account enhancing education quality.

Our aim is to reopen schools in a healthy and safe environment. We believe that these studies will set a descent base for the discussions, and discussing these matters will help us to find the best way to reopen schools safely after covid-19 pandemic. Thank you very much for your patience.

Burak Maviş

KTÖS Education Secretary