

# Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan



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## Introduction

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education is providing an additional \$121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund). This legislation will award grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

South Carolina will receive \$2,112,051,487 in ESSER III funds from the Act, with 90 percent being awarded to school districts with amounts determined in proportion to

the amount of Title I, Part A funds they received in summer 2020 from funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The remaining funds will be used for state-level activities to address issues caused by COVID-19.



This plan describes how the LEA or district will provide the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, including those that have already returned to in person instruction. This report template complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP Act (Public Law 117-2), the [ESSER III grant](#) terms, conditions, and assurances (CFDA Number 84.425U), and the interim final rule established by the U.S. Department of Education, [86 FR 21195](#).

## Maintaining Health and Safety

### Overview

A district's plan must include how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies or practices and a description of any such policies or practices, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations including: universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); hand washing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies or practices; and coordination with state and local health officials.

## **Description of maintaining health and safety**

We have and will continue to follow all guidelines set forth by CDC and SCDHEC. We currently have several practices in place which will remain in place for the school year unless new guidance comes from SCDE, CDC, and /or SCDHEC.

### **Transportation**

- Students will be separated on the bus where feasible. Siblings or children living in the same household may be seated together.
- Drivers and any students who choose to utilize CCPS bus transportation may choose to wear proper face coverings for the route to and from school.
- Buses will be appropriately disinfected after each use.
- Bus drivers will be properly trained in COVID safety measures.
- Social distancing on buses will be a challenge. Parents are encouraged to provide transportation to school if possible.

### **Arrival**

- Staff, parents, and students will be encouraged to perform health checks including temperature checks before arriving on campus.
- Students will be dropped off in designated areas and no students will be walked in by parents unless approved by the school's principal.
- Students will use hand sanitizer or hand washing upon arrival into classrooms.
- Common areas will be restricted if needed due to a rise in cases.

### **Dismissal**

- Use of the car line will be used for student pick-up only. No in-person parent pickup to avoid parent gatherings in school lobby or in front of school.
- Individual schools will set protocols for dismissal on their campus.

### **Cafeteria-Breakfast and Lunch**

- Cafeteria protocols may differ from school to school based upon school population and cafeteria size.
- Hand washing/hand sanitizer will be available before and after lunch.
- Cafeterias will be appropriately disinfected after each use.

### **Classrooms**

- Multiple social distancing strategies, with a minimum of three feet, will be implemented based on feasibility of the unique space and needs of each school.
- Students will be taught appropriate hygiene/COVID practices as guided by CDC and DHEC.
- Drinking fountains are available.
- Frequent handwashing and hand sanitizing will be encouraged.
- Appropriate measures will be taken for cleaning Chromebooks/other technology devices.
- Staff will observe students for illness prior to starting class and refer students to nurse as needed.
- Staff will clean/disinfect at appropriate times.

### **Changing of Classes**

- Hallway traffic may be limited by schedule and students will be monitored while

walking in hallways.

- Hand washing/hand sanitizer will be available.

#### **Visitors/Volunteers**

- Non-essential visitors may be limited and restricted to the front office.
- Visitors essential for learning may be allowed with principal approval.
- Other visitors may be allowed with principal approval.
- Visitors are encouraged to call the school before entering the building.
- Proper face coverings will be required as per current CDC and/or DHEC guidelines.
- The number of visitors per campus will be determined by the size and population of the local school office.

#### **Playgrounds**

- Handwashing/sanitizer will be available upon re-entry to building.
- Students may wear a mask if they choose.

#### **Cleaning/Hygiene**

- Cleaning will target cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched hard, nonporous surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, stair rails, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, and any other surfaces that are visibly necessary.

#### **Health Services**

School personnel will provide COVID safety training/materials to faculty and staff.

- School personnel will provide education to staff and students regarding health and safety protocols as they relate to prevention of communicable disease.
- Students or staff demonstrating symptoms will be referred to health care professional. Prior to returning to school, the school nurse will be consulted or documentation from health care provider will be provided.
- Exclusion procedures will follow best practices.
- Students/adults who are symptomatic will be issued a mask to wear until they are picked up by a parent or leave the building.

#### **PPE**

- Use of personal masks will be allowed for anyone in the buildings.
- Use of personal masks will be allowed on buses.

#### **Athletics/Activities**

- Locker rooms, weight rooms, band halls, & equipment will be sanitized and cleaned daily.
- All athletic clothing will be washed and sanitized daily.

## **Policies or Practices Regarding CDC Recommendations**



### **Universal and correct wearing of masks**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Students are allowed to wear masks in the school building and on any bus. Information was sent home and posted on our district and school websites about the correct use of masks and the types of masks available. We detailed that disposable masks should be used one time only and that cloth masks can be used, but must be washed frequently.

### **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Classrooms will be set up with desks and tables spaced apart as much as possible. Plexiglass was removed this year. Our younger students stay with one teacher and in one class all day long except for related arts time.. Each class / grade level has also determined what way works best for them to switch classes so that not everyone is in the hall or a classroom at one time. Recess times are staggered so that there are not several grades outside at the same time on the equipment.

### **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Students are reminded to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. We also have hand sanitizer in each classroom and in the halls for use if they are unable to use soap and water. Our younger classrooms are equipped with sinks. Students are required to wash their hands before and after eating. If a student is coughing, has shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, they are sent home per the DHEC Exclusions List. They will be assessed by the nurse and may be required to wear a mask and/or wait in an isolation room to be picked up if they exhibit respiratory symptoms.

### **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Calhoun County Public Schools uses a custodial checklist that was created with the pandemic in mind. This checklist ensures that high touch areas are cleaned and disinfected, along with cleaning each classroom with fidelity.-We check HVAC units in each classroom on a bi-weekly basis and replace them as needed, or recommended.

### **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

We have a spreadsheet set up for all district locations that is accessible to the District COVID Team, respective principals, nurses, and attendance clerks. This sheet is reviewed daily and is updated based on DHEC reports of positives and close contacts as well as any other in district reports. For anyone who has been reported as a positive, we calculate their isolation dates based on DHEC guidelines for 5 days from the start of symptoms or date of their test if they were asymptomatic. They may return to school on day 6, but they must remain masked at school for days 6-10. The only exception is while they are eating lunch. If parents do not want their student to wear a mask, the student may

remain home for the full 10 isolation period.

As of March 1, 2022, close contact tracing and quarantine needs will be decided on using DHEC's new metric which allows schools to move towards an endemic approach for COVID-19 with flexibility should a surge or new variant occur. The guidance applies to individual schools and not entire school districts. If a school or an individual cohort has 20 percent of students and staff having COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 within 72 hours, it will be considered an outbreak. Close contacts within that school or cohort will be required to quarantine. The quarantine time is the same as for a person who is positive. They will quarantine for 5 days and can return to school on days 6-10 but must wear a mask. If symptoms develop during that time or they test positive, then they will have to have their isolation days calculated based on their symptoms or test, whichever is earlier. The close contact definition now excludes any student within 3-6 feet of an infected person if the exposed student was wearing a mask. For anyone who was reported to be a close contact with someone outside of the school setting, they do not need to quarantine unless the school is currently contact tracing. Any faculty, staff, or students who have been maximally vaccinated will no longer have to quarantine if they were exposed as long as they have no symptoms. Currently, fully vaccinated means it has been at least two weeks since receiving either your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna, your one dose of Johnson & Johnson, or your updated booster of any brand. If you have not received your booster and it has been longer than 5 months since your 2nd dose of Pfizer or Moderna or longer than 2 months since your J&J vaccine, you are not maximally vaccinated. Proof of vaccination must be emailed to Melissa Mack, RN at [mmack@ccpsonline.net](mailto:mmack@ccpsonline.net) in order to not have to quarantine. If symptoms develop or you test positive during the 10 days after contact regardless of vaccination status, you will have to isolate. If parents do not want their student to wear a mask, the student may remain home for the full 10 isolation period.

### **Diagnostic and screening testing**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

We do not do diagnostic or screening tests here. We do send students or staff home if they have one of the three symptoms listed on the DHEC Exclusions List (cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, or new or worsening cough) and require that they either stay home for 5 days and return to school masked for days 6-10, get tested for COVID, or go to the doctor for a different diagnosis. One of those three things had to happen in order for them to return and we have to have documentation of it. The only exception to this is, as according to the Exclusions List, is if their symptoms have another documented more likely cause (Asthma, allergies, etc). If they have been exposed to someone with COVID and they are exhibiting symptoms, they will be required to isolate for 5 days and can return to school masked for days 6-10. If parents do not want their student to wear a mask, the student may remain home for the full 10 isolation period.

### **Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible**

#### Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Calhoun County Public School District partnered with the Family Health Center to offer

a vaccination clinic for staff who elected to receive the vaccine. The vaccination clinics were held multiple times this year and last year. Some of the clinics were open to all eligible residents of Calhoun County.

### **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices**

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Students with disabilities were among the first to return to the school buildings in September of 2020 then again in March 2021. Students were provided masks, where appropriate, and other protective equipment. The classrooms were outfitted with air purifying systems to help protect students and staff. There was an abundance of wipes and sanitizer for all. Staff were provided gowns to be used during toileting and changing students. Water coolers were installed in the classrooms to prevent student from using community fountains. Students consumed meals in the room as well as made use of the classroom restroom all in attempts to limit social interaction outside of the classroom “family. As changes to protocols have been made by CDC and DHEC, we have been able to make those changes in schools.

### **Coordination with state and local health officials**

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The district is in continuous communication with Low Country DHEC for Schools. They sent communication alerting the district if there was a report of someone in our district who was either positive or a close contact. We were able to ask questions and get guidance from Low Country DHEC on several occasions. Guidance was also given to us from the State School Nurse Consultant, Vicky Ladd. We will continue to review SCDHEC's school COVID website multiple times throughout the year and update our procedures as needed.

## **Continuity of Services**

### **Overview**

Districts must describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

### **District response on continuity of services**

As the school district transitioned back to delivering continuity through face to face learning, the staff has done their best to provide social and emotional support that engages all students in a meaningful and interactive learning environment.

Our efforts will be intentional when continuing to build relationships and maintain



connections to ensure our students feel safe and valued. We will continue to support student learning through ongoing communication and collaboration with all stakeholders.

Our teachers will set goals using knowledge of each student, various student data, and content of South Carolina State standards. Teachers and administration will consider various ways to deliver content using tools and resources available to each student. Modes of instruction may include but are not limited to project-based learning, personalized learning, videos, group and direct instruction, and the use of various resources.

A variety of strategies will be used to monitor, assess, and provide feedback to students about their learning progress. Teachers will make instructional adjustments based on formative/summative assessments and observations.

Each school will have an assigned Mental Health Counselor who will work closely with school counselors to address social, emotional, and mental health issues. The district will continue to work through food services and other agencies to address food insecurities.

## **Periodic Review**

### **Overview**

Districts are required to review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023, including seeking public input and taking such input into account in determining whether to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

If a district developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that was made publicly available and was developed with public comment, but does not address each of the required aspects of safety established in the ARP Act, the district must, as part of the required periodic review, revise its plan consistent with the ARP Act requirements no later than six months after it last reviewed its plan.

### **District response on ensuring periodic updates to its plan**

This plan will be a living document. The District COVID Team will periodically review the plan based on updated information and occurrences in order to make recommended revisions as necessary.

# Public Input

## Overview

The ARP Act requires that school districts make their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online and that the plans be in an understandable and uniform format; to the extent practicable, are written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent. Before making its plan publicly available, school districts must seek public comment on the plan and develop the plan after taking into account public comment.

## District response on public input in development of its plan

The district will seek public input through our district wide School Improvement Council. The plan was also presented to faculty/staff to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to give input. All input will be discussed and taken into account whether revisions are necessary. The plan is available for anyone to access on Calhoun County School District's website.