



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

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' **academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs**. This plan describes how Rappahannock County Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Shannon Grimsley by contacting Amy Newman, Clerk of the School Board, at 540-227-0023.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Rappahannock County Public Schools was one of the few divisions who began the year offering in-person instruction to all students. Even in the height of the pandemic, the RCPS Health and Safety Plan assured the overall wellness of the school community and prevented any significant spread in the schools and community. With the consistent use of a data-driven, dynamic decision-making matrix, the district was able to act quickly in the event of any positive cases, activating a local contact tracing team ahead of the Virginia Department of Health to ensure immediate notifications and quarantine procedures. Families were provided a health monitoring checklist, and the district adapted to various stages of positivity rates—establishing more stringent guidelines for those presenting with symptoms in schools. The district maintained a very stringent deep cleaning and disinfecting process each day and also upgraded HVAC systems to include UV decontamination systems and air scrubbers for every classroom. Masks and PPE were provided to all students and staff, and plexiglass barriers were installed in every classroom. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, RCPS received very positive feedback from the community, and also from health and educational professionals across the region, state, and even the national level. Many strategies utilized by RCPS were replicated in other districts across the state based on their proven effectiveness. The RCPS 2020-2021 Reopening Plan can be viewed on our website by clicking [here](#).

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

RCPS has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

Additionally, up-to-date information about the district's reopening strategies can be found on the [School Reopening Information](#) website.

RCPS has adopted policies on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Universal and correct wearing of masks on school buses in accordance with the CDC order for use of public transit (includes school buses)

- RCPS will continue to use the dynamic decision-making matrix to determine if additional layers of mitigation are required. To begin the 2021-2022 school year, all those who are unvaccinated are *strongly encouraged* to wear a mask while on school property. RCPS may require masks to be worn, regardless of vaccination status, as an added mitigations strategy as school and community transmission data indicates.
- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)
 - RCPS will continue to strive for at least 3 feet of distancing between students
 - Additional transition teachers have been added to, not only address learning loss in certain grade levels, but add capacity for smaller class sizes
 - Plexi-glass barriers will still be utilized in all classrooms
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
 - RCPS will continue to have educational signage in place regarding proper handwashing and covering of coughs and sneezes
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
 - HVAC upgrades have been completed and RCPS will continue the use of UV decontamination systems and air scrubbing systems in all classrooms
 - Additional custodial staff have been added as well to ensure continued regular deep cleaning and sanitization of school facilities
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
 - RCPS will continue to utilize its [School Response Logic Model](#) for activating local contact tracing and quarantine procedures in coordination with the Virginia Department of Education
- Diagnostic COVID -19 testing can be conducted with parent/guardian consent at the Fit-Kids School-Based Wellness Center located at RCES if a student presents with symptoms of COVID-19 at school
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities have been ongoing and RCPS will continuously work with our regional Health Department to offer local vaccination clinics as well as to help notify families of available vaccine clinics in surrounding areas
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies will continue to be provided, by IEP amendment if necessary and should in-person learning not be appropriate for health reasons
- Coordination with state and local health officials will be ongoing

Section 3: Continuity of Services

RCPS has taken and will continue to take actions to 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.

Academic:

- RCPS administration has reviewed student achievement data to align proper academic supports and interventions as necessary
- Additional transition and specialist staffing will be provided to address specified areas of learning loss as indicated through data analysis
- Individualized, one-to-one technological devices will again be provided to all students as teachers will be required to maintain a blended learning model using Canvas or Google in case the need arises to switch to distance learning for public safety reasons
- Additional instructional programs and intervention materials have been ordered to address identified learning gaps

Social Emotional:

- RCPS will continue to maintain Tier I SEL interventions using *Second Step* and *Habitudes* SEL curriculum materials

- RCPS will maintain the morning meeting times and morning seminar times at RCES and RCHS respectively in order to address SEL needs of students and implement SEL curriculum with fidelity
- A newly established School-Based Wellness Center will be in place where students and staff will be able to access mental health supports including counseling services, out-patient therapeutic services, and Link substance abuse counseling
- The School-Based Wellness Center will also provide access to integrated care services and physical health care, including sick visits, well visits, and point of care diagnostic testing (Strep, Flu, COVID, etc.) through a telehealth agreement with Valley Health. These services will be billable to Medicaid and private insurance.
- RCPS will continue to maintain a positive, healthy, and student-centered climate, boosting morale and Pride in the schools
- The RCPS PRIDE program will expand to implement a Wellness Wednesday one day per month to provide SEL and enrichment activities designed to promote overall wellbeing and social interaction between peer groups

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, RCPS sought and continues to seek public input and took such input into account at School Board meetings throughout the school reopening process, stakeholder surveys, and administrative reopening team meetings. The final hearing on the plan before adoption was held and recorded in the RCPS School Board minutes on August 10, 2021.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), RCPS will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and RCPS will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

RCPS has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at the [RCPS School Reopening Information webpage](#)
- The plan is available in Spanish and can be translated into other languages as requested
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Dr. Carol Johnson at 540-227-0023 to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Dr. Carol Johnson at 540-227-0023