

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

## Hardesty Public Schools

To comply with Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education's Interim Final Rule, each school division that receives ARP ESSER III funds is required to submit a plan that describes how it will safely return to in-person instruction and ensure continuity of services, including school divisions that have already returned to in-person instruction. This plan is published on Hardesty Public School's website. <https://www.hardesty.k12.ok.us/>

### 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 Hardesty Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and district staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Chad Fox, Superintendent of Hardesty Public Schools, at [chadfox@hardesty.k12.ok.us](mailto:chadfox@hardesty.k12.ok.us) or 580-569-2773. The primary goal of Hardesty Public Schools continues to be to safely offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible under the guidelines provided by the Governor's Office, the Oklahoma Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Hardesty Public Schools is planning for a return to in-person learning five days a week for all PreK-12 students beginning August 12, 2021.

Health and safety mitigation procedures will continue to be in place in our schools and transportation in August, including physical distancing and may include face coverings. As guidance from health officials continues to evolve, mitigation practices may become less restrictive. Our instructional staff will focus on the design and delivery of engaging, in-person instructional experiences that will mirror our instructional approach before the pandemic. The Hardesty Public School Board is committed to nondiscrimination concerning sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, status as a veteran, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. This commitment prevails in all of its policies and practices concerning staff, students, educational programs and services, and individuals and entities with which the Board does business. Mr. Chad Fox, Superintendent of Hardesty Public Schools is designated as the responsible person (Compliance Officer) regarding assurances of nondiscrimination. Any complaint alleging discrimination based on a disability shall be directed to Mr. Chad Fox, superintendent. The Hardesty Public School Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Hardesty Public Schools strongly believes the best

educational opportunity is provided to our students through an in-person environment. We recognize and respect that some families may still be interested in a virtual learning option for the next school year. Parents of PK-5 students should contact their building principal to discuss blended/virtual learning for next school year if interested. Families in grades 6-12 who are interested in a virtual option are asked to do the same.

## Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Hardesty Public Schools 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 in-person instruction, five days per week. HPS has established a COVID-19 team within the school division and a point person at each school facility. HPS has been in contact with local health department officials in our planning for reopening our buildings and will maintain continued contact with Kiowa County Health District officials. The HPS health mitigation plan will continue to focus on the following guiding principles:

- promoting behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19
- maintaining healthy environments and operations
- preparing for and acting when someone gets sick and/or presents with symptoms.

HPS will continue to monitor student absenteeism using already established attendance procedures. Should the rate of absenteeism significantly increase in any school or across the district, the Superintendent will consult with stakeholders regarding possible causes and determine the next steps for the division. HPS will be partnering with our families and community with the expectation that all students and staff continue to complete a health screening protocol before reporting to school. HPS has developed a communication strategy that includes orientation and training for staff and students specific to COVID-19 mitigation strategies. HPS will provide information and training to staff and students on safety protocols, signs, and symptoms of COVID-19, first aid situations, provide classroom supply support, conduct virtual training sessions, and ensure social distancing is maintained during training. Staff will receive guidance on CDC recommendations for triaging students in the classroom, accommodating a sick student, isolation protocol, Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidance, medication administration guidelines, and protocols. HPS will communicate, following applicable laws and privacy policies, having staff and families self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days under health information sharing regulations for COVID-19, HPS will notify staff, families, and the public of school closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure. Upon confirmation of positive lab findings, the school will contact the School Administration and the Health Department. The Health Department would do contact tracing to determine the communication needs of parents, and students, and address them closer to infected areas. All staff, students, and stakeholders will be

provided information on the importance of staying home when sick and maintaining social distancing practices. Lesson plans, modeling, verbal wellness screenings, and skill practicing will be used to ensure that staff and students understand the importance of personal hygiene and practice these preventative behaviors. HPS may provide age-appropriate signage and material to all facilities to promote healthy hygiene. Materials may be posted in the entrances, hallways, classrooms, food service areas, restrooms, and other areas as deemed appropriate by the building principal, site supervisor, and Central Office staff. Facemasks will not be made mandatory for any staff or student. HPS will work with both parents and primary care providers to determine the best safety practices to make appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities and students with medical conditions. HPS will work with families to accommodate virtual learning options for students who feel that virtual learning provides a better alternative for their health needs. Hardesty Public Schools will clean and disinfect each building regularly, with special attention to frequently touched surfaces; transport vehicles, and it will ensure adequate cleaning supplies are available for custodial use. HPS will provide additional training opportunities related to COVID-19 and enhanced sanitation measures for the custodial staff. HPS will provide staff working with students, staff, and areas of exposure with personal protective equipment and guidance according to Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines. Each building will have a dedicated space for those who present with symptoms of COVID-19 that is separate from areas that may be used regularly. Hardesty Public Schools will provide access to additional hand sanitizer at key locations throughout the building including high-traffic areas like the main offices and classrooms. Students will continue to be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and frequently especially before eating and after using the restroom. Hardesty Public Schools will work to provide adequate access to learning materials and technology to minimize sharing to the greatest extent possible (e.g. dedicated student supplies, lab equipment, computers, etc). The sanitization of shared items between uses will be a high priority. Hardesty Public Schools will strive to make certain our ventilation systems operate properly and to increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Systems will be checked regularly and filters will be replaced regularly. The Hardesty Public School Board is committed to nondiscrimination concerning sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, status as a veteran, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. This commitment prevails in all of its policies and practices concerning staff, students, educational programs and services, and individuals and entities with which the Board does business.

Students will continue to be encouraged to bring water bottles from home daily for hydration. HPS classrooms will be arranged to ensure appropriate social distancing, to the greatest extent possible, between students while maximizing available space and ensuring proper entry and egress routes. While students and staff are in the building, communal areas will be monitored for cleanliness and physical distancing. HPS will maintain appropriate social distancing, to the greatest extent possible, on buses and other vehicles. Drivers and schools will assign seating based on

recommendations and guidance provided by the state, our stakeholders, and collaborative partners.

Meals may be served and consumed in the cafeteria along with the classroom or outdoor setting to optimize physical distancing. Students may continue to bring their meals as appropriate. Students and staff should avoid sharing food and utensils. Distribution of food items and utensils will continue to follow the guidance of best health mitigation practices. All non-disposable food service items, including cooking and preparation equipment and student trays, are handled with gloves and will be cleaned and sanitized after each use with a high-temperature dish machine or washed with dish soap and hot water. Food Service staff will wash their hands following CDC guidelines. Food Service staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched student surfaces; including keypads, tray guides, and employee surfaces; including door handles, sink handles, and keyboards.

HPS continues to work closely with Kiowa County Health Department officials to coordinate and communicate vaccine efforts, as well as allow for the use of school buildings to provide vaccination sites for school staff, students, and community members. Multiple vaccine clinics were hosted at HPS sites, for both staff and the community. HPS may assist with clinics to support the vaccinations of 12-18-year-olds and their household members, as well as any remaining staff and community needs.

### Section 3: Continuity of Services

Hardesty Public Schools 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's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

**Academic Needs:** All students Pre K-12 will be eligible to return to school for in-person learning five days per week for the 2021-2022 school year. HPS has made plans for the continuity of new learning to existing alongside planning and responding to the loss of learning through modifications of curriculum, pacing, and targeted assessment and remediation opportunities. The focus will remain on remediating reading and math skills in grades K-8, and Credit Recovery/SOL remediation for grades 9-12 for English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. One additional core instructional position will be added for the 2021-2022 school year for self-contained grade 6 to provide in-person instruction five days per week with appropriate physical distancing, as well as to assist teachers in addressing the increased learning needs of our students. Assessments will be administered at the start of the school year to identify individual student needs. Formative assessments and delivery will be adjusted accordingly, and progress monitoring will be utilized to assess effectiveness, and drive future instruction. Collaboration with all instructional staff will be imperative to provide the instructional delivery necessary for all students to succeed. Students who fall into the Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier 2 and Tier 3 level of instructional needs, will continue to receive specialized instruction through the implementation of best practices, which will be progress

monitored for effectiveness. Students in need of services including English Language Learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD) will be provided the opportunity to receive instruction based on the direct service time indicated in the student's Individualized Instructional Plan (IEP) and/or Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). Students with 504 plans and identified gifted students will continue to receive differentiated and accommodated instruction. Dedicated daily and weekly time scheduled for teacher planning, collaboration, and continued professional development and support based on both student and staff needs will continue. Reflection of student data and progress will be used as a means to improve student services and instruction. The administration will continue to monitor instruction and classroom/school operations. We recognize and respect that some families may still be interested in a virtual learning option for the next school year. Parents of PK-5 students are asked to contact their building principal to discuss virtual/blended learning options. Families of students in grades 6-12 will have a virtual option available as well and should also contact their building principal for details. . Options being considered are a Virtual Hardesty program and utilizing Edgenuity and/or Edmentum to support virtual requests. Upon request, specific details about what virtual learning will look like will be handed out at a required virtual parent/school meeting. This meeting will be held before school starts and allow communication between parents and the school about the choice they want their child to have as their learning environment. It is important to note that students and families interested in virtual learning should plan for a one-semester-at-a-time commitment for the 2021-2022 academic year. In the event of a quarantine or school closure, Hardesty Public Schools has a contingency plan to move forward with virtual/remote learning with new instruction for all students. All students will be issued a learning device (Kindle or Chromebook). Students who are unable to access content remotely via the Internet will be provided with alternatives to be able to continue to access new learning.

**Social/Emotional/Mental Health:** Teaching staff will embed social and emotional learning opportunities and will explicitly instruct students on safety and health habits as we progress through the phases of reopening. School counselors will target their instructional delivery and support based on communication with staff and families, as well as observations of student behaviors and needs. Our schools focus on PBIS Positive Behavior Interventions and Support in all aspects of the school day. Training in trauma-informed practices will be made available to new and/or interested staff via face-to-face, virtual, or video-recorded formats. Hardesty Public Schools will have trained staff available by phone or in-person to assist any student who self-refers or who is otherwise identified as experiencing mental health issues. Hardesty Public Schools will continue to provide crisis support to students via each school's Counselor. For students receiving special education services, their IEPs will be amended, if appropriate, to ensure the provision of essential support and/or services to address their social-emotional functioning. Family members of enrolled students who may need or request mental health support will be referred to the school counselor, who can help make a referral to a community or private mental health provider. School staff that may need mental health assistance will be referred

to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Referrals to local mental health services for students will continue as normal. The Hardesty Public School Board is committed to nondiscrimination concerning sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, status as a veteran, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law.

#### Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Hardesty Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account. Staff and parent input was collected through surveys, Superintendent Staff Advisory meetings, Superintendent Parent Advisory committee meetings, public comment opportunities at advertised school board meetings, and individual communications received at the school and division planning levels.

#### Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Hardesty Public Schools 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 Hardesty Public Schools 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

Hardesty Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at [www.hardesty.k12.ok.us](http://www.hardesty.k12.ok.us)
- The plan will be included in the June School Board meeting packet and an opportunity for public comment on the plan will be provided.
- The plan is available in multiple languages through the use of Google translate service and our Family Engagement Liaison