



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

Updated: August 2021

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) – Education Stabilization Funds and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds require school districts to create a “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan”. These requirements were announced by the United States Education Department on April 22, 2021 and must be met as a condition of receiving ESSER III funds.

The school district’s plan must be:

- In an understandable and uniform format
- To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent
- Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent
- Be made publically available on the school district’s website
- Updated at least every six months, or more depending on updates in Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance through September 30, 2023 and public input must be sought when revisions are made

The school district’s plan must address the following sections:

- How it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:
 - Universal and correct wearing of masks
 - Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (use of cohorts, podding)
 - Handwashing 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 school communities
 - Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
 - Coordination with State and local health officials.
- How it 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.

Table of Contents

Letter from the Superintendent.....	3
Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks.....	4
Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing (use of cohorts, podding).....	4-6
Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette.....	6-7
Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation.....	7
Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine, in Collaboration with the State, Local, Territorial, or Tribal Health Departments.....	7-8
Diagnostic and Screening Testing.....	8
Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities.....	8
Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies.....	9
Coordination with State and Local Health Officials.....	9
Ensure Continuity of Services to Address Students’ Academic Needs.....	10
Ensure Continuity of Services for Students’ and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health.....	10
Ensure Continuity of Services Which May Include Student Health and Food Services.....	11-12
Revision of our District’s Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan.....	12

July 2021

Oracle Elementary School District Community,

I thank you for reviewing our Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan. In the following pages you will read about our District's efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as well as other viruses and communicable diseases. One of the most powerful, important things we can each do to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home when we are sick or have symptoms. If we each stay home when we are sick, and keep our children home when they are sick, the mitigation efforts on the following pages are a safeguard for those who have been exposed but are unaware of their exposure or carry the virus but are asymptomatic.

The 2020-2021 school year was filled with unique challenges that our students, staff, and community tackled together. As the new school year is quickly approaching, your school district remains committed to make sure that our students have the opportunity to experience a traditional school year, receiving in-person instruction from their teachers, surrounded by their friends and peers, and in an environment that is enriching not only academically but socially as well. In order to provide this opportunity to our students, it is truly up to us as adults to be good role models, practice good hygiene and respiratory etiquette and do our part to keep our community healthy.

As I write this letter, our District is not permitted to require students, staff, or visitors to wear face masks. Likewise, our District is not permitted to require students, staff, or visitors to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In Arizona, the use of face masks and the COVID-19 vaccine are personal choices. In the Oracle Elementary School District, we will respect those choices. We ask that our students, staff, and visitors stay home when they are sick and when they are on campus or on one of our school buses, they respect each of the mitigation procedures listed in this plan.

We can truly do anything as a community. So when we are each asked to stay home when we are sick, wash our hands, cover our sneeze, and follow mitigation procedures, I know we can do it and I know we will do it because it is our best chance to provide in-person instruction for our students.

Crystle Nehrmeyer
Superintendent
Oracle Elementary School District
cnehrmeyer@osd.org
520 896 3074 office

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

At the time of the most recent revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, schools in Arizona are not permitted by law to require students, staff, or visitors to wear a face mask while on campus or on a school bus. Should this change, this plan would be edited immediately to reflect such changes.

Prior to Arizona's shift from prohibiting the requirement of all students, staff, and visitors to wear face masks, the universal and correct wearing of masks was a priority in our District. For example, students were taught to make sure their face mask covered the bottom of their chin and the bridge of their nose. If a student was observed with their face mask "down" and tucked under their chin, staff was taught to respectfully remind the student to adjust their mask.

We know it is not only important that the face mask be worn correctly, but it is also important that the face mask worn is clean. For students, staff, and visitors that choose to wear a face mask while on campus or in a school bus, a clean, disposable mask is available to them compliments of the District.

Mountain Vista K-8 School included mini-lessons on morning announcements to teach or remind all students how to universally and correctly wear their face mask. School administration found that these mini-lessons were not only a good opportunity to teach healthy habits and procedures to students, but a friendly reminder to staff that how they wore their face mask was observed by students and it is important for staff members to not only meet the expectations set for students but to also exceed those expectations as adults and role models on campus.

When the use of face masks were originally recommended then required by the State of Arizona, our Governing Board formally modified our Dress Code policies to require the universal and correct use of face masks of all students, staff, and visitors 5 years of age and older. Under advisement from legal counsel in July 2021, those policies were formally modified back to their original version that did not require the use of face masks on campus or on school buses.

District Policy JL outlines student wellness programs and procedures. District Policy GBGCA outlines general wellness programs. Lastly, District Policy GBGCB describes staff health and safety procedures specifically related to communicable diseases.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing (use of cohorts, podding)

At the time of the most recent revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, cohorts and "podding" are not procedures followed by our District for the following reasons:

- Mountain Vista K-8 School is home to many family groups where one or more parents/guardians work at our school and their children attend our school with their siblings.
- When the majority of students were learning from home during the 2020-2021 school year and school districts were required to provide in-person support and access to

technology for specific students, we practiced using cohorts as a mitigation procedure. We found that cohorts by grade level were not a true mitigation procedure as an exposure from one family group could result in the quarantine and possible isolation of several grade level cohorts.

- We then reorganized our cohorts by family group instead of grade level. We found this cohort system was more effective than grade level cohorts, yet not a reasonable expectation or mitigation procedure once the majority of students returned to campus for in-person learning in March 2021.

When students returned to campus for in-person learning in March 2021 and when they return from summer break in August 2021, our facilities will allow for physical distancing in the following ways:

- Our Governing Board has approved maximum capacities for each grade level and class size. The acceptance of open enrollment students is based on current numbers in each grade level. These grade level capacities promote smaller class sizes.
- Until July 2021, classrooms at Mountain Vista K-8 School each contained a pod of four desktop computers and a printer. To allow more room for physical distancing, the pods of computers were modified to a single table with two desktop computers and a printer for classroom use.
- During the 2020-2021 school year, teachers were encouraged to evaluate the furniture, storage, and materials in their classroom. Any furniture, storage, or materials that were traditionally stored in the classroom but could be discarded or stored elsewhere were removed from the classroom to allow more space for physical distancing.
- Large picnic tables were purchased and arranged in outdoor common areas throughout campus. During the 2020-2021 school year, teachers were encouraged to use outdoor spaces when adequate physical distancing in the classroom was not possible. During the 2021-2022 school year, many of our spacious areas of campus will be fenced off for construction projects. This does not mean outdoor spaces are not an option, this only means that different outdoor spaces may need to be utilized. For example, the large field behind the school gym has traditionally not been used as a space for outdoor recreation during lunch time, but during the 2021-2022 school year it may be used for this purpose. Additional picnic tables have been ordered and will be available to maximize physical distancing soon.
- Furniture from our school office and district office lobbies have been removed to maximize space for physical distancing and to not encourage the congregation of several people in small office lobbies.
- To allow physical distancing, our Maintenance department was moved from two small, populated offices to one much larger office with adequate space for employees to physically distance while working at their desks.
- Our library renovation and expansion project is scheduled for completion during Spring 2022. This project will more than double the amount of educational space available in our current library. It will also create separate study rooms, a reading intervention

classroom, more restrooms, and a larger space to be used by staff for professional development and meetings.

- Our new classroom building for Grades 5-8 is also scheduled for completion during Spring 2022. This project will add 10 classrooms to our campus. These classrooms will be larger than the current classrooms used by Grades 7-8 in the Bateman Building. The student restrooms are designed to allow for more physical distancing and eliminate the accessibility for several students to congregate in small restroom spaces moving forward.
- Our school office is scheduled for renovation during Summer 2022. Upon completion, the renovation will double the current square footage of the school office and although not related to physical distancing, it must be noted that it will also provide a secure and specific entrance for all campus visitors.

At the time of the most recent revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, our District does not have policy specifically dedicated to physical distancing. However, as mentioned above, we do have several practices in place as well as policy regarding maximum grade level and classroom sizes which support the ability to physically distance to the greatest extent possible in classrooms.

District Policy IIB states that it is the responsibility of the Governing Board to establish appropriate class sizes. District Policy JFB summarizes the admission of open enrollment students based on Governing Board approved class size and program capacity limits.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

At the time of the most recent revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, handwashing and respiratory etiquette are two of the most powerful, universal, effective mitigation procedures against COVID-19 and other illnesses for students and staff. The reason is because good handwashing and proper respiratory etiquette are two things that all people can do to not only keep themselves healthy, but to contribute to the health of our school community. Good handwashing and proper respiratory etiquette does not depend if a person has received the COVID-19 vaccine and can be taught to young children.

Because of its great importance, this mitigation procedure was emphasized during the 2020-2021 school year and will continue to be emphasized throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The current practices are in place for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Signs with words and visuals are displayed in each student and staff restroom with the recommended procedure for good handwashing, provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services.
- Breaks will be scheduled throughout the school day so students and staff may wash their hands before and after a snack or a meal, after recess, and as needed.
- Students and staff will be taught and reminded to cover their cough or sneeze with the inside of their elbow instead of with their hand.

- We are aware that it is best to wash our hands with warm water and soap. When it is not possible to wash with warm water and soap, a hand sanitizer gel is a good alternative. Hand sanitizer gel is available for students, staff, and visitors throughout campus.
- Disposable tissue is also available for students, staff, and visitors throughout campus.

District Policy GBGCB-E generally addresses the importance of good sanitation practices in relation to the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases. District Policy JL addresses student wellness programs and procedures.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation

While the majority of students participated in distance learning during the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year and the majority of the 2020-2021 school year, many staff members and some students continued to work and learn from the Mountain Vista K-8 School campus. To safely welcome students and staff to campus each day required meticulous cleaning, sanitation, and an evaluation of the cleaning products and procedures used on campus.

We immediately reviewed our current inventory of surface chemicals and explored chemicals not currently in our inventory that were recommended by custodial companies. Due to supply and demand, we shifted from using disinfectant wipes to a hydrogen peroxide spray that could be used with paper towels instead of wipes. We also created a procedure to sanitize school buses after each run, multiple times per day.

We replaced all of the restroom hardware that required students and staff to touch soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, water faucets, etc. with hands-free hardware. This was a costly yet beneficial investment for the safety of students and staff while on campus. We displayed signs with illustrations and written explanations of how to safely and appropriately wash hands, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services in each restroom. We connected the signs with our common language of respectful, responsible, and honest conduct.

We allocated over \$200,000 from our Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to replace HVAC systems on campus. By the middle of the 2021-2022 school year, each HVAC unit on the Mountain Vista K-8 School campus will be new. Before purchasing new HVAC units, the District sought professional guidance from KC Mechanical Engineering to determine if replacing the current HVAC units would truly improve the ventilation in classrooms and enclosed areas across campus. The guidance and evaluation showed that replacing the existing HVAC units would not only improve heating and cooling on campus, it would greatly improve the quality of ventilation as well.

District Policy ECB establishes expectations related to Building and Grounds Maintenance.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments

The Pinal County Health Department quickly established reoccurring virtual meetings for public school officials to meet and receive up to date information directly from our local health

department. Mountain Vista has consistently participated in these virtual meetings. The meetings are an important opportunity each week or bi-weekly (depending on the need of the public school officials) to ask questions and learn from the experiences of other school districts in our community.

Contact tracing has been and continues to be a topic discussed during the virtual meetings. Our District has established a contact tracing procedure that has been in effect since March 2020. Our procedure depends greatly on students, staff, and families communicating with school officials. From there, we trace attendance records, sign-in sheets, check seating charts, meet with staff, and connect with each individual that was exposed while on campus.

With support from Pinal County Health Department, we created letters with detailed information to go home with each student and staff member that was sent home to quarantine or isolate. While doing our best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect students and staff that had not been exposed, we also took pride in our efforts to maintain confidentiality and privacy during this challenging time.

Our District does not have a policy specific to contact tracing. However, our District consistently follows guidance and directives regarding contact tracing from the Pinal County Health Department. District Policy KL addresses the District's relations with government authorities such as state and local health officials.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Diagnostic and "pooled" testing are becoming more common in public schools. At the time of the most recent revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, our District does not provide COVID-19 diagnostic or screening testing nor have a specific policy related to testing. However, this is an area our District plans to seek feedback from stakeholders in the near future. Should our community be interested in the District providing COVID-19 diagnostic or screening testing, this is an opportunity we will definitely explore.

Since early 2020, the District has referred all students, staff, and community members in need of a COVID-19 test to one of the many free locations recommended by the Pinal County Health Department as well as the Sun Life Clinic in Oracle on American Avenue.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

District staff were given the opportunity to receive two rounds of the COVID-19 vaccine in early 2021. The vaccine was provided by our community partners at Sun Life Clinic. The vaccine was optional and remains optional at the time of this revision.

The District has shared information made available by State and local health officials regarding the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine for non-employee, members of our community and will continue to do so.

The District has not had the opportunity to host a vaccine clinic for non-employees or members of our community. However, we are willing to do so when the opportunity is presented.

District Policy GBGCA outlines general wellness programs and District Policy JLCB-E addresses expectations for the immunization of students.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies

In November 2020, all Arizona public schools were required to mandate the use of face masks on school campuses as well as on school buses. The recommended age that children start to wear face masks was 2 years old. Our District considered the cognitive and sensory development of students in our preschool program that were 3 and 4 years old and required face masks to be worn by students 5 years of age and older. If a parent wanted their younger child to wear a face mask, they were welcome and encouraged to do what was best for their child and their family. This information is being shared because it is one of many examples of an appropriate accommodation for children both with and without disabilities with respect to health and safety policies as well as child development.

Based on guidance from the American Association of Pediatrics, “Children with medical conditions that interfere with cognitive or lung function may have a hard time tolerating a face mask. For these children, special precautions may be needed.” Therefore, our district practices and procedures allowed flexibility for students with medical conditions that might not be capable of safely wearing a face mask all day while at school. These students were encouraged to wear a face shield, take “mask breaks” and in some specific cases, abstain from wearing a face mask in general. This discretion was given to the Superintendent by the Governing Board.

At the time of the most recent revision of our District’s Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, our District does not require face masks to be worn by students or staff. However, students and staff are encouraged to wear a face mask while indoors if they are not fully vaccinated or if they believe it is best for the child, self, or family. Should this change and should mask mandates be reestablished in Arizona or in our District, appropriate accommodations for children will continue to be made.

District Policy IHBA outlines special instructional programs and accommodations for disabled students. District Policy IHB outlines special instructional programs for all students in need.

Coordination with State and local health officials

District and school staff has established a close working relationship with the Pinal County Health Department as well as the Arizona Department of Public Health. This relationship has resulted in clear communication from the District to State and local health officials but also from State and local health officials back to the District.

Communications, updates, and information from State and local health officials are shared with school staff on a regular basis.

District Policy KL addresses the District's relations with government authorities such as state and local health officials.

Ensure Continuity of Services to Address Students' Academic Needs

Mountain Vista K-8 School will open for the 2021-2022 school entirely in-person. In the event that the Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Department of Public Health require schools to transition to distance learning for health and safety reasons, we are prepared to do so. This preparation looks like 1:1 tablets and Chromebooks for all students in Grades K-8, internet hot spots for families in need of internet at home, research based curriculum with a digital component, and procedures for in-person services as needed.

One of the most important mitigation procedures is that students, staff, and visitors stay home when they are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 or any other communicable disease or virus. Because the District is encouraging students, staff, and visitors to stay home when they are sick, this also means that we are committed to meeting the academic needs of students while they are home. Students in Grades K-4 will receive printed work to complete while at home. Students in Grades 5-8 will have the opportunity to use their Chromebook to access digital curriculum, use their .mvs Google email account to communicate with their teachers, and submit assignments via Google classroom. All students will be provided with individual or small group support when they return to campus. This support might happen during the traditional school day or after school.

No child will be denied access to their education or special services while at home. This is not only a requirement established by the State of Arizona, this is what is best for kids and therefore a priority of the Oracle Elementary School District.

District Policy JLCC outlines District expectations and procedures regarding communicable and infectious diseases. It is important to remember that COVID-19 is not the only virus that impacts a child or staff member's attendance at school.

District Policy IHB outlines our District's expectations for Special Instructional Programs. Whether at home for exposure to COVID-19, at home due to a chronic illness, away from campus while on an educational field trip, or away from campus on a recreational trip with family, students need to have access to their education and educational programs. Our District remains committed to providing each student with the educational experience they are entitled to receive.

Ensure Continuity of Services for Students' and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health

The unintended isolation of students during distance learning has led to a great need for additional social, emotional, and mental health resources for students. Likewise, the pandemic was also isolating and traumatic for teachers and staff members who were either required to

reinvent how they teach, continue to work in-person with students with special needs, or even teach students both online and in-person simultaneously. Many students and staff alike experienced the loss of family and friends.

Before the pandemic and distance learning, our District received one of the Arizona Department of Education's School Safety Grants. This grant was written to pay for the salary of a much needed school counselor. What we then saw was an example of supply and demand. Suddenly, school districts from across the state, like the Oracle Elementary School District had funding to hire school counselors. However, there were only so many school counselors available to be hired. In fact, because for many years school districts did not have funding to hire school counselors, many educators opted to obtain degrees and certifications outside of school counseling.

Eager to hire a school counselor, our District reached out to several employment agencies that specialize in contract employment for schools including school counselors, school nurses, therapists, etc. Then, the pandemic hit. We quickly changed our scope of work and searched for a school counselor that could work with individual and small groups of students online. We went through multiple employment agency school counselors during the 2019-2020 school year. At the time this plan was written, the District continues to search for a school counselor that will meet the needs of our student body and serve our community.

While we continue to search for a school counselor, we continue to refer families as needed to Horizon Behavioral Health. We also recently shared information in Cat Tracks, our monthly newsletter about grief counseling available both in-person and online through Tu Nidito in Tucson. For staff, our HR/Payroll Office regularly sends email reminders regarding free counseling that is available to employees.

District Policy JLD outlines expectations and goals for guidance and counseling of students in the Oracle Elementary School District.

Insure Continuity of Services Which May Include Student Health and Food Services

The Oracle Elementary School District consistently delivered free "grab and go" breakfast and lunches for all children, 18 years of age and younger throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year at Mountain Vista K-8 School bus stops. During the upcoming school year, we will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch for all students at Mountain Vista K-8 School, regardless of whether they would traditionally qualify for free, reduced price, or full price meals. With great support from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) we will be able to provide nutritious meals and snacks for our students.

Our District has maintained a strong working relationship with the Pinal County Health Department as well as Sun Life Clinic. Our staff has referred students and families to both Pinal County Health Department and Sun Life Clinic for immunizations for many years. Through recent efforts and advocacy by Mountain Vista K-8 School staff, the Pinal County Health Department will

now be open in Oracle each Thursday and Friday. This will be a great benefit to families that would typically need to drive to Mammoth, San Manuel, or Florence for regular immunizations.

Each school year our District partners with the University of Arizona and the Lion's Club to provide vision and hearing screenings for students. This is a service that will continue through the 2021-2022 school year. Likewise, permitting availability, we will continue to offer routine dental cleanings once each school year for interested families.

We understand that in order for a student to do their best in school, their basic needs must be met. We take pride in our commitment to work with families to make sure students are fed, clothed, have access to free immunizations, and quality health care services. Our District is open and interested to expand the services we provide to families and is always looking to build beneficial working relationships in our community.

District Policy JLCB-E outlines Arizona School Immunization Requirements. District Policy GBGC-E outlines immunization requirements for District staff. At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is not required for students or staff. District Policy EF outlines Food Service requirements.

Revision of our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, as new guidance and expectations are shared by the State and local level, and as schools become more and more aware of the specific things we can do to keep our students, staff, and community safe, school districts will need to revise and edit their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plans.

This plan will be revisited on a monthly basis. Should the plan need to be revised or edited, any changes will be shared with our community on our district website at www.osd2.org as well as shared in Cat Tracks, our monthly newsletter and during Governing Board meetings.

Feedback from our community is valued and important. At the beginning of the new school year, a survey will be made available for all parents, guardians, family members, and community members of the Oracle Elementary School District. This survey will also be available on our website at www.osd2.org. This survey will help our school district measure the needs of our specific community and create programs to enrich not only the educational experience of our students but of our community as well.

There are areas of this plan that are strong. There are also parts of this plan that are still in the development stages. At the areas of this plan that are in the development stages continue to grow and strengthen based on stakeholder feedback, or plan will be revised to document those changes.