

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

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief 3.0 (ESSER 3.0) Fund under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. Funding provided to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) helps safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students.

In the fall of 2021, LEAs developed and made publicly available a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. All plans were developed with meaningful public consultation with stakeholder groups. LEAs are required to update the plan every six months through September 30, 2023, and must seek public input on the plan and any revisions and must take such input into account. LEAs also must review and update their plans and ensure they align with any significant changes to CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

The following information is intended to update stakeholders and address the requirement.

LEA Name: Elizabethton City Schools

Date: January 24, 2023

1. Describe how the LEA has continued to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of the revised plan.

After a review of our August 2022-23 Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, ECS began the revision process by consulting with our Director of Schools and Coordinated School Health Director. The CSH Director communicates regularly with the Carter County Health Department and suggested several revision recommendations for the plan. She also consulted with the CCHD to get feedback on our revisions. School administrators were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Health and Safety Plan after consulting with their administrative teams. Suggested revisions will be presented at the February School Board meeting with an opportunity for feedback from stakeholders. Our school board meetings are open to all stakeholders including parents, school staff, students, and community leaders. These meetings are streamed live, and recordings are posted on our YouTube channel.

2. Describe how the LEA engaged the health department in the development of the revised plan.

Our Coordinated School Health Director considered current recommendations from the Tennessee Department of Health and the CDC while revising our Health and Safety Plan. Our CSH Director communicates regularly with the Carter County Health Department and suggested several revision recommendations for the plan. Suggested revisions were sent to the Carter County Health Department Director for recommendations and feedback. The CCHD Director approved the proposed revisions.

3. Provide the extent to which the LEA has updated adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the following health and safety strategies.

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| <p><i>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies</i></p> <p>We will continue the 2022-23 school year utilizing in-person learning. Currently, there is no plan to provide a virtual option except for students in isolation or quarantine. The traditional, 5-days a week instructional model provides instruction in-person while adhering to additional safety protocols for all students. TDOE-granted virtual days may be utilized as needed. Students with Disabilities who are quarantined will receive services in accordance with their IEP/504 plans.</p> |
| <p><i>Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)</i></p> <p>The traditional, 5-days a week instructional model provides instruction in-person while adhering to additional safety protocols. The use of cohorts/podding is not part of our revised health and safety strategies.</p> |
| <p><i>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette</i></p> <p>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette continue to be highly encouraged. Hand sanitation stations are available in all buildings. Increased cleaning and sanitation of high-contact areas are a priority. Parents are requested to check temperatures prior to sending students on the bus or to school. Training for staff and students on recommended healthy routines is provided as needed. Staff and students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick or running a temperature of 100.4 or greater. Face coverings are available in all schools.</p> |
| <p><i>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation</i></p> <p>We continue to utilize the following procedures in our facilities. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle. Increased cleaning and sanitation of high-contact areas are a priority. Increased air circulation in classrooms through windows, doors, and air purifiers (as feasible and practical). Large group assemblies are limited to following school safety guidelines (as feasible and practical). Field trips that can be conducted safely, given current conditions, are approved. Social distancing within the classroom is encouraged (where feasible and practical); six feet may not be possible in all classrooms. Schools may alter arrival and departure procedures to minimize contact and congestion, as needed. Physical activity is conducted outdoors whenever possible to group students safely.</p> |
| <p><i>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine</i></p> <p>School administrators maintain confidentiality in accordance with the ADA (American Disabilities Act) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). A student or staff member with COVID-19 should follow TDH guidelines for returning to school. Isolation and quarantine guidance for parents and staff members may be obtained by contacting the CCHD (877-857-2945) or by visiting Novel Coronavirus (tn.gov). Potential school closure is based on the level of risk determined by the district. Classroom/school/district closures only occur if a significant need warrants the closure or if it is mandated by the state or local health officials. If the need arises to close schools due to COVID-19, virtual learning per state guidelines will be initiated for impacted students as soon as possible. If closure is needed for intensive cleaning, communication will be provided.</p> |

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| <i>Diagnostic and screening testing</i> |
| Diagnostic and screening testing may be obtained by contacting the CCDH (877-857-945) or local physicians and pharmacies. |
| <i>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</i> |
| Vaccinations are not mandated for faculty, staff, or students. Vaccines are currently available for ages 6 months and older at the Carter County Health Department, local pharmacies, and the regional health system. |
| <i>Universal and correct wearing of masks</i> |
| Face coverings are available in all schools. |

4. Provide a current description as to how the LEA is ensuring continuity of services including but not limited to services that address students’ academic needs and students’ and staff’s social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

Based on Tennessee Department of Health guidelines, Elizabethton City Schools ensures the continuity of services to address academic needs by continuing school in person for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year. Based on this plan, we expect to provide all services to students and families in person in accordance with policies, statutes, and all regulations. Common sense infectious disease prevention measures remain in place based on CDC recommendations and Tennessee Department of Health guidelines.

Elizabethton City Schools teaches TN State Standards in all courses and utilizes our Tier II and III intervention blocks to account for learning loss and acceleration. Subgroup services are provided per IEP/ILP. ESSER 3.0 funds enable us to mitigate learning loss by hiring additional teachers to reduce class sizes, work with more students in small intervention groups, and serve additional students in grades 1-8 through TN ALL Corps tutoring.

Our social, emotional, and mental health supports continue at each school with additional school counselors and career advisors, three mental health counselors, and a school social worker. Students receive social and emotional health supports support during guidance classes, small group sessions, and individual counseling and advising. School nurses continue to address health concerns and conduct any necessary actions regarding COVID-19. Mental health counselors are available to all faculty and staff members as needed. Our teachers and administrators participated in “Mental Health Debriefing” sessions offered by the Tennessee Department of Health and Crisis Response Team volunteers. ECS administration and teachers participated in resiliency training which will continue for the remainder of the school year.

Other supports for continuing services during the 2022-23 school year include the Community Eligibility Provision for free breakfast and lunch for all students at East Side Elementary and Harold McCormick Elementary School. Families of students at West Side Elementary, T.A. Dugger Jr. High, and Elizabethton High School may apply for free or reduced meals through the application process per USDA guidelines.