

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

CSDE ARP ESSER



May 27, 2021

Introduction

Our Connecticut school communities — with students at the center — continue to be bold and innovative as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States Department of Education (USED) has recognized the importance of supporting these efforts, particularly with the infusion of resources to support education in Connecticut. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) has granted the State of Connecticut an additional \$1,105,919,874, providing the opportunity to develop bold, high-impact plans to address the substantial disruptions to student learning, interpersonal interactions, and social-emotional well-being. While earlier sources of federal relief funding during the pandemic supported our ability to first survive, and then thrive, ARP ESSER is Connecticut's opportunity to transform our schools.

The federal government requires that each Local Education Agency (LEA) create a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* (the Plan). This plan must be publicly available online by June 23, 2021 and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) as a part of the ARP ESSER application due mid-August 2021. To aid in the planning process, CSDE is providing this template to guide LEAs planning as well as serve as an opportunity to share the Plan with the public.

Due to the expansive efforts of the CSDE and the educational community, as of the week of May 3–7, no district in the state of Connecticut was fully remote. This was achieved through extensive planning by each LEA; therefore, this template should be seen as a means to support LEAs' efforts to date and can be used to expand upon or revisit previous Reopening School Plans.

There are five areas that LEAs must consider when developing the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*:

- I. Health and Safety Strategies
- II. Continuity of Services
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Periodic Review Process
- V. Understandable and Uniform Format

The CSDE has maintained consistently that in-person learning is the preferred opportunity for students and that schools should work to safely open their buildings for the 2020–21 school year. We are proud to have led the nation in safe return to in-person instruction — as of April 30 nearly 82.7% of Connecticut school districts were offering a predominately fully in-person learning. Thank you for your work and helping us continue to be an example of how we can best serve our children safely in school buildings.

I. Health and Safety Strategies

Describe how the LEA plan includes (or will be modified to include) the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in the table on page 2:

The Lyme- Old Lyme Schools will continue to adapt our policies and procedures to ongoing health data and mitigation strategies recommended by the CDC and the DPH. Since we have been fully open PK-12 starting September 1, 2020, students and staff are well versed in various mitigation strategies used to control the spread of disease.

Please complete the table below with the LEA's mitigation strategy for each category. In developing the LEA's response, please review and consider the [CDC guidance](#) and the [Connecticut DPH and CSDE guidance](#) for each category.

Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Universal and correct wearing of masks	<p>The Lyme-Old Lyme Schools will only require masks for all students, staff, and visitors should public health measures dictate such a need. Absent the necessity for such, no masks will be required.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	<p>The Lyme-Old Lyme Schools will continue efforts to physically distance all individuals on campus, where feasible, only if public health measures dictate such a need. Absent the necessity for such, no physical distancing will be required.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	<p>As hand washing and respiratory etiquette are good reasonable practices to help stop the spread of disease, the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools will continue to teach and encourage good hygiene practices in these areas. Hand washing stations previously installed in cafeterias in response to the pandemic will remain in place.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	<p>The Lyme -Old Lyme Schools will continue our regular cleaning practices. Ventilation will continue to meet or exceed building standards set by the CSDE and industry best recommended practices.</p>

	Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	Should contact tracing become necessary, our school nursing staff is well versed in the practices and procedures of this process. They will continue to follow local health guidelines specific to notification and quarantines.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diagnostic screening and testing	The Lyme -Old Lyme Schools will not offer any testing for students or staff.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	The Lyme-Old Lyme Schools will continue to notify families and staff members about vaccination opportunities, but will not require either students or staff to get vaccinated for COVID. We will adhere to all applicable state laws and regulations regarding vaccinations.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	As always, the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools will provide necessary accommodations to any student or staff member with a documented need for such in accordance with our policies and state and federal law.

LEA must implement, to the greatest extent practicable, each element of the most up-to-date guidance listed in the table.

II. Continuity of Services

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

Our main goal this year in being fully open PK-12 was to provide a sense of normalcy to our students and staff. We were successful in doing so and plan to return to an even more normal school year in 2021-2022. To ensure access to services for those that need it, we will offer additional extended day programming to support both academic growth and social/ emotional development. We will continue with many of the same practices that were utilized this year to support our staff and students academically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and physically as we have throughout this pandemic.

III. Public Comment

Public comment is a key element of stakeholder engagement, and at times a stand-alone element which may include dedicating time to open forums at board of education meetings, conducting surveys, or soliciting written input from external residents not involved in the decision-making process. Describe how the LEA plans to provide the public the opportunity to provide input and for public comment in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the LEA took such input into account:

Beginning June 2, 2021 the Lyme -Old Lyme Schools will gather public input on this plan by presenting it at our board of education meetings, sending it home to families, and sharing it with the two towns that we service. Input will be gathered through a dedicated email (lolreopening@region18.org) specific for that purpose. Input will be considered in our regular reviews of the plan.

IV. Periodic Review Process

LEAs are required to periodically 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. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account the public comment.

Below are the dates that LEAs must submit a refreshed or updated plan to CSDE via eGMS.

Review/revisit Dates:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

V. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is 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. Describe the unique needs of the LEA's audience and confirm the LEA's approach to ensuring the document is accessible:

At this point we have no unique needs in our community that would prevent an individual from accessing this plan. Should we receive any requests for such, or become aware of the need for such, we will provide the accommodations necessary for those individuals who are unable to access the plan in its current format.