

# 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 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 Madison Board of Education has adopted four policies specific to the COVID-19 Pandemic for School Year 2020-2021. In light of the circumstances, temporary amendments were made to certain existing Board policies and administrative regulations and additional administrative regulations were made on new topics. Such amendments and additions are guided by the need to (1) safeguard the health and safety of students and staff while continuing to educate students in accordance with state law; (2) adhere to all applicable laws, rules, and guidance; and (3) preserve flexibility for the Board and the Administration to account for further changes related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Policy C-19.2 Health and Safety: Board thus directs the administration of the Madison Public Schools (the "Administration") to develop health and safety protocols consistent with applicable laws, rules,

regulations and requirements, and to consider current guidance in the development of such protocols. Policy C19-4 Masks and Face Coverings: creates guidelines and protocols for masks during transportation and school day activities.

Policy C-19.3 Families First Coronavirus Response Act Leave addresses staff use of sick time and leaves.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221. Original Date of adoptions: August 25, 2020 (Policy C19.1) .The COVID-19 Policies and Regulations are extended through Board action. At this time, the district legal counsel, Shipman and Goodwin, has advised districts to extend only Policy C-19.2 Health and Safety, until which time, the current legislative session has ended and public health guidelines and applicable laws, rules, regulations and requirements are released for the 2021-2022 school year. However, if such new guidance is not available for revision of policy C19-4 for summer school in July, the mask policy would also remain active.

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><b>The district will review and revise Mask wearing policies as the state of Connecticut offers new guidance for schools.</b> The current requirements indicate that students must wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while inside the school and on the bus, with exceptions only for those students for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions. Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks. We also encourage students to bring an extra mask to school daily. Schools will have backup disposable masks available for students who forget them. Prior to school opening, families and students will be provided with instructional videos and safety protocols including how to wear a mask and hand washing.</p> <p>“Mask Breaks” will be provided during the day in outdoor areas or large spaces with social distancing.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	<p>Facilities personnel will work with building administrators and their committees to determine classroom layouts that will maximize social distancing between student workstations, achieving 3 feet where feasible. When necessary, other school spaces have been re-purposed for instructional space. Space has been maximized between the teacher and students and room density has been taken into consideration. Physical Education classes will take place outdoors, whenever possible.</p> <p>Infection rates will be monitored to determine if there is a need to further cohort students. Students in grades K-5 are naturally cohorted by classroom or team assignment.</p>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</p>	<p>Madison students will be educated in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols to prevent the spread of disease upon arrival to school in their classrooms. Frequent verbal reminders will be in place and signage will be posted to help reinforce the new expectations. Signage with messages that help stop the spread of disease will be posted.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation</p>	<p>Ventilation has been maximized to provide ongoing distribution of outside air. The heating and cooling systems will be serviced in the summer to make sure systems are fully operational and any problems are addressed in a timely manner. Normal routine cleaning of surfaces and objects will continue. Frequently touched surfaces and objects like light switches and door knobs will need to be cleaned and then disinfected to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By cleaning the surface or object with soap and water or a comparable solution.</li> <li>• And then, disinfect using an EPA-approved disinfectant external icon.</li> <li>• If an EPA-approved disinfectant is unavailable, a 1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions will be used to disinfect</li> </ul> <p>Surfaces and objects that are not frequently touched will be cleaned; however, they do not require additional disinfection. Additionally, disinfectants should typically not be applied on items used by children, especially any items that children might put in their mouths.</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	<p>The District has updated its definition of a close contact to the following: A close contact is generally defined as someone within six feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes cumulatively, but specific parameters may vary by the nature of each case. Contact tracing will be conducted in accordance with updated guidance from the state. The district currently maintains a 10-day quarantine period for students to return to school, athletics, or extracurricular activities. The District will clearly communicate with families the dates for both returns if a student is instructed to quarantine.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diagnostic screening and testing	<p>In order to prevent transmission among the school population, parents are instructed to screen students using the MPS Daily Health Screening before leaving for school. Students should stay home if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19; or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, unless vaccinated.</p> <p>In accordance with current guidance from the state, the district currently maintains a 10-day quarantine period for students to return to school, athletics, or extracurricular activities. Individuals with symptoms (and/or exposure for non-vaccinated individuals) will be urged to take a PCR test prior to their return to school. All individuals, regardless of vaccine status, will be required to notify the school nurse of any positive PCR tests and self-quarantine for a period of 10 days.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	<p>The district, in coordination with the local and regional health agencies, provided all staff, including our contracted bus drivers, with the opportunity to attend clinics that administered both doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Clinics for 1st round vaccines were held on March 1, 2021; March 4, 2021; March 6, 2021 and March 11, 2021. Clinics for 2nd round vaccines were held on April 1, 2021; April 8, 2021 and April 22, 2021. A total of 628 staff members were provided with the opportunity to participate in these clinics with a total of 435 staff members participating (69.2%). This number does not necessarily reflect the percentage of staff vaccinated as some staff members made alternate arrangements for their vaccine.</p> <p>The district regularly provides parents with information for student vaccination opportunities</p>

		<p>via our mass messaging system. Proof of vaccination should be submitted to your medical provider to be added to the student's official immunization record. Once that has been completed, the pediatrician can then forward the updated immunization record to our health offices. Knowing our students' vaccination status allows us to quickly determine who is exempt from contact tracing and quarantining.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies</p>	<p>Madison Public Schools developed its reopening plan with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The plan addresses implementation of the Individual Education Plans (IEP) to assure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) while focusing on health and safety precautions.</p>

*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:

Madison Public Schools was proud to offer Extended School Year (ESY) summer services to students who qualified through in-person learning. Planning and Placement Teams (PPT) will meet to review the student's current performance and adjust the IEP if appropriate. The plan will be adjusted as new guidance is provided to the district from the State Department of Education. Each student who has an IEP is assigned a special education case manager who collaborates with general educators to implement the IEP. For students with 504 Plans, their case manager is the guidance counselor. The case managers will communicate with parents about their students' program through phone calls and emails.

For all students, the district has provided 1:1 Chromebooks as well as online access to a variety of programs to assist in providing reinforcement of skills and material. Summer Math and Reading activities have been broadly distributed and can be accessed by all students with their Chromebooks. All families have been offered Wi-Fi hot spots for Internet access. The district has also obtained subscriptions for ELs in Lexia, IXL Read Live, Raz Kids and "Off 2 Class" ESL instruction platforms. Additional materials and resources are offered to our EL students and families.

Food services will continue in all schools in the fall, with anticipation of the full array of pre-pandemic offerings. All students will receive the application for free and reduced support for meals.

With the receipt of federal funds, the district will have one full time social worker assigned to each building. This will provide community outreach and family support for all students. All staff will be trained in signs of trauma prior to the start of the year so they can recognize and provide intervention for staff or students who might be struggling. An addition to the Middle School Effective Schools Solution team at Polson will provide increased availability for students suffering from anxiety, stress and other emotional needs in the school setting. This program includes an additional component of family outreach and supports.

Additional intervention staff at the elementary schools will provide timely small group interventions for our youngest learners as supported by research. All levels of the system will benefit from the math and literacy coaches being reinstated to serve all levels of the system.

### 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:

Although this plan is responding to requirements and guidelines from the State of Connecticut, it was built from local feedback as well. This plan is informed by building teams of administrators, staff members and parents examining the use of space and working to meet distance requirements. This plan was developed by working with our partners in each and every area of the system. In 2020, Madison established a steering committee of community stakeholders to oversee the fall reopening plans. The steering committee identified two divisions and several task force teams under each division as follows:

#### **Activities/Academics:**

- Instructional Model,
- Extended Learning Opportunity, and
- Training/Organizational Response.

#### **Infection Control:**

- Health Care Screening
- Technology/Transportation/Meals
- Physical Plant, and
- Building Access/Space.

The plan was informed by almost 100 people serving on these teams and representing all aspects of the system. The district steering committee includes membership from the Board of Education, administration, central office staff, various unions, teachers, town offices and parents. In addition, each building has a separate and distinct committee of broad representation examine and plan for the use of building space, The input from these teams along with the state department regulations continues to shape the plan as it is presented. It will be revised according to the schedule in the section below.

The Board of Education reviewed the proposal for the dedication of funding from the ARP ESSER in several public meetings on: April 6, May 11, and May 25, 2021. When the Board of Education voted on the allocation of funds, the vote was 9-0 in support of the distribution. That Board meeting was attended with one of our highest public rates of the year (44 people). The input from these meetings resulted in the proposed use of funds for ESSER III.

The reopening plan will be posted on the public website for at least a 2-week period for additional input and public comment as the procedure followed in August of 2020.



## 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 on or before:

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

## 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:

Madison has provided Board of Education meetings in Closed Caption for the hearing impaired and maintains a website that is compliant with ADA provisions. In past practice, Madison posts both the state submitted document, as well as a more parent friendly version on the website. Translation services are used as needed to support effective communication with Non-English readers.