



2021-22 Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction (ARP ESSER III Funds)

Albemarle County Public Schools
401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902
Phone: (434) 296-5820 Website: www.k12albemarle.org

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. As a complement to our [2021-22 ARP ESSER Funding Plan](#), the following "Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction" describes how Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer, at rschmitt@k12albemarle.org.

Since schools closed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our goal has been to get back to five days of full-time, in-person instruction. We took steps toward that goal as we progressed through the various stages of our reopening plan during the 2020-21 school year. We know that most students and families want to return to in-person learning as soon as it is safe to do so, which is why ACPS will open the 2021-22 school year with five days per week of in-person learning at all of our schools. During the COVID-19 pandemic and our time in online and hybrid learning, though, we discovered that some students and families prefer an online learning experience. In response, we will offer a full-day virtual learning experience for students in grades K-12 who choose to enroll in our [Virtual School](#) for the 2021-22 school year. More information about our in-person and virtual learning options is available on our [2021-22 Learning Options](#) web page.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

ACPS 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 full in-person instruction. ACPS will continue to follow mitigation guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD). Our [Mitigation Strategies](#) web page includes specific safety practices, policies and videos that address areas referenced below and others:

- **Universal and correct wearing of masks:** All students, employees and visitors must wear a mask or acceptable face covering when indoors and when riding in an ACPS vehicle or bus. Our [Mask Policy](#) web page provides our detailed policy.
- **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing:** We have removed excess furniture from classrooms, added individual desks in place of group tables, and increased capacity through the use of mobile classrooms to promote physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:** Students are required to wash or sanitize their hands frequently during the day. Minimally, this includes each time they board a bus, enter a room, and go outside for recess, and before they eat. All building entry points, classrooms, cafeterias, and buses have hand sanitizer dispensers to promote and support this requirement.
- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:**
 - Throughout the day, custodial staff disinfect high-touch surfaces. At night, custodians clean and disinfect classrooms and other spaces that were in use during the day. Disinfecting wipes are available in all occupied classrooms for use by students and employees to sanitize high-touch surfaces periodically throughout the day.
 - ACPS has made investments and improvements to the ventilation systems in our school facilities. Wherever possible, we have installed upgraded air filters and adjusted our mechanical systems to increase airflow from the outside. Every day, in an effort to improve indoor air quality, we perform a building air flush, both before and after occupancy. Also, we have placed air purifiers with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters in all classrooms, clinics, and school buses.
- **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the BRHD:** ACPS has designated an Infection Control Officer (ICO) for every school and department. School nurses serve in this role for schools. ICOs are trained in contact tracing practices and work with the health department to identify affected individuals. ICOs also provide affected individuals with guidance on next steps. Positive individuals and their close contacts will isolate/quarantine for a designated period.
- **Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities:** In the winter and spring of 2021, ACPS coordinated vaccination clinics in conjunction with the VDH and the BRHD and surveyed staff on vaccination status to ensure all staff were able to receive vaccines. ACPS has hosted student vaccine clinics at all secondary schools and is in the planning phases for elementary schools in preparation for when the vaccine is approved for younger children. **UPDATE (Dec. 12, 2021):** With the FDA emergency authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for younger children, ACPS partnered with the BRHD during the month of November to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics at several of our schools to students ages 5-11. We plan to continue to promote and provide opportunities for students to receive the vaccine.
- **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies:** Albemarle County School Board policy provides guidance on the expectation that all students are following established mitigation strategies. If a student is unable to follow any of our mitigation strategies, a plan is developed to assist the student so that they can participate in in-person learning. Additionally, in the spring and fall of 2021, all parents were given the opportunity to choose a virtual learning option that includes all appropriate accommodations provided in a student's individualized learning plan (IEP).

- **Coordination with state and local health officials:** ACPS regularly partners with our local health department and medical professionals, including participating in weekly meetings and ongoing discussion about current guidance on mitigation strategies.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

ACPS has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including, but not limited to, services to address the academic needs of students and the social, emotional, and mental health needs and other needs of students and staff. Through implementation of the mitigation strategies listed above and detailed on our [Mitigation Strategies](#) web page, ACPS can offer in-person learning to students. In-person learning offers the best strategy for continuity of services. Also, ACPS will use funding from this grant to provide smaller class sizes that support the academic and social needs of students. An additional mental health/guidance counselor is being provided at each school to support students' social, emotional and mental health. Finally, ACPS will use additional tutoring monies to support students identified as having learning gaps.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, ACPS sought public input and took such input into account as follows:

Beginning in the fall of 2020 and continuing throughout the 2020-21 school year, ACPS hosted multiple virtual meetings and programs designed to obtain input from parents, students and teachers to inform our stages of returning to in-person instruction and to guide our health and safety practices. Parents received and completed surveys, selected instruction preferences, and provided public comment during School Board meetings to guide ACPS implementation of the best instructional practices in light of CDC-guided COVID-19 health and safety methodology and student needs. A survey specifically aimed at obtaining ARP Plan recommendations from our community was administered in July 2021. Survey results were used in formulating our [2021-22 ARP ESSER Funding Plan](#), with emphasis on learning recovery and meeting the academic, health and safety needs of our school communities.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), ACPS will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for safe in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and ACPS 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

ACPS has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted on the ACPS website at <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/fiscal-services/2021-22-arp-esser-funding-plan>.
- Through use of the drop-down menu of our web translation tool, the plan may be viewed on our website in any of eight languages, including English, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Nepali, Pashto, Swahili, and Chinese.
- The plan may be orally interpreted for parents. Contact the International & ESOL Welcome Center at (434) 296-6517 or ESOLinterpretation@k12albemarle.org to request interpretation.
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting the Department of Special Education & Student Services at (434) 296-5885 or by emailing SPEDhelp@k12albemarle.org.