



LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Updated May 2023

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. This plan describes how Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) 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 Gary Honaker, Chief Financial Officer.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Orange County Public Schools 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. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

Orange County Public Schools will continue to offer five days per week of in-person instruction beginning with the fall semester on August 9, 2023.

In addition, Orange County Public Schools adopted policies on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- **Health and Safety**
OCPS will follow the *Final Covid-19 Quarantine Isolation Guidance 7-14-22* provided by the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**
OCPS will continue to encourage proper handwashing and proper hygiene. OCPS will have hand sanitizer stations throughout each building and in each classroom.
- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**
OCPS will continue cleaning high touch surfaces throughout the day, providing sanitizing solution to every classroom in every building and using sanitizing foggers in each classroom at the end of each week. OCPS will have appropriately ventilated buildings and will follow a filter replacement schedule. OCPS will use a sanitizer between bus routes and at the end of bus routes each day.
- **Diagnostic and screening testing**
OCPS will not participate in any diagnostic or screening testing for Covid 19.
- **Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities**
OCPS will continue to partner with the Virginia Department of Health and Orange Family Physicians to provide Covid 19 vaccinations to eligible students and staff.

The Orange County School Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, disability, status as a veteran, genetic information or any other characteristics protected by law in its employment practices or educational program and activities. Compliance inquiries should be directed to the Director of Human Resources, 200 Dailey Drive, Orange, VA 22960 or by phone at 540-661-4550.

- **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies**

If a student has a medical condition or disability that requires accommodations for the learning environment or school bus, a health plan will be written in conjunction with the parents and the child's health care provider. Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) will be written in accordance with Virginia Regulations and IDEIA to ensure students with disabilities are provided instruction and accommodations.

- **Coordination with state and local health officials**

OCPS will continue a strong collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health. The Director of Special Education, Director of Human Resources, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent receive weekly updates and communication from the Virginia Department of Health.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Orange County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to 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.

Recognizing the significant impact and disruption caused by this pandemic, OCPS will continue to be responsive to the evolving needs of students and staff. Students and/or staff may have experienced death/loss, income reductions from family members losing their jobs or other issues that have come to fruition during the COVID-19 crisis and were unable to access counseling services. Knowing this, care will be taken to accommodate mental health needs which may have been exacerbated in these uncertain times. The mental health of OCPS students and staff will remain a top priority during these challenging times.

Through the Virginia Tiered System of Supports, school staff will identify and respond to students' academic, behavioral and social/emotional needs. We recognize the universal impacts of COVID-19 have heightened the need for learning environments that are safe, welcoming and supportive of all students and will actively work to create this in all classrooms. Additionally, we will help students weather this crisis through recognizing and responding to their emotions, leaning on prosocial relationships and utilizing positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS). We recognize that social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to re-engage students, support adults, rebuild relationships and school communities, and create equitable learning environments for all students and SEL will be a district-wide focus. School counselors will be available to all students and when needed, will make connections to additional support such as Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT), outpatient counseling, or consultative services through school psychologists and social workers.

All members of the school community have been through a crisis. While it is important to focus on the social emotional wellness of students, school staff have also been impacted. We recognize that returning staff will have different emotions and abilities to adjust to the transition back to school, meet changing expectations, and manage increased student needs. Staff may also be dealing with their own worries and anxieties for themselves and their families. Social emotional learning and self-care starts with adults, and leaders will build wellbeing activities into practices for staff. We will prioritize community-building and creating safe, supportive environments for staff in addition to students.

Staff experiencing more difficulties may need positive coping mechanisms, additional mental health services, or crisis support. Information will be provided regarding mental health services available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems. EAPs address a broad and complex body of

issues affecting mental and emotional wellbeing, such as alcohol and other substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems, and psychological disorders. Additionally, EAP counselors are also available to work in a consultative role with supervisors to address employee and organizational challenges, as needed.

OCPS will address learning loss by employing additional support personnel to provide in-school tutoring for grades K-5, providing summer learning programs, purchasing instructional software, and employing full-time substitutes to assist with continuity of instruction.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan Orange County Public Schools conducted consultation with stakeholders, including students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators and school staff. These stakeholders represented the student population including children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students. OCPS also provided a survey that allowed the public the opportunity to provide input on the best use of ESSER III funds.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

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

Orange County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at www.ocss-va.org.
- The plan is available in other languages upon request. Please contact instruction@ocss-va.org if you need a translated copy.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact the office of instruction to request translation at 540-661-4550.
- 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 office of special education at 540-661-4550.