

DISTRICT: Robertson County Schools

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



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, enacted on March 11, 2021. ARPA ESSER Funding provides a total of nearly \$122 billion to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students. In addition to ARP ESSER Funding, ARP includes \$3 billion for special education, \$850 million for the Outlying Areas, \$2.75 billion to support non-public schools, and additional funding for homeless children and youth, Tribal educational agencies, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives.

LEAs must develop and make publicly available a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* that meets the following requirements within 30 days of receiving ARP ESSER allocation. If an LEA developed a plan before ARP was enacted that does not address the requirements, the LEA must revise its plan no later than six months after it last reviewed its plan. All plans must be developed with meaningful public consultation with stakeholder groups (i.e.,

families, students, teachers, principals, school and district administrators, school leaders, other educators, school staff, advocacy organizations representing student groups). The consultation process must include an opportunity for input and meaningful consideration of that input. ARPESSER plans to be in an understandable and uniform format; to the extent practicable, 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. All plans must be made publicly available on the LEA's website and published on the Tennessee Department of Education's (department) website within thirty (30) days.

Please note that LEAs need to **update** the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan **at least 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. All revisions must include an explanation and rationale of why the revisions were made.

Questions in this health plan were developed by the US Department of Education.

Consultation with Stakeholders

1 Describe how the LEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- i. students;
- ii. families;
- iii. school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and
- iv. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.
- v. tribes;
- vi. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
- vii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

Robertson County Schools utilized a variety of methods to distribute and gather information to plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds. The district developed a dedicated informational webpage and disseminated a Community Feedback Survey, held community information sessions and presentations, focus group meetings, utilized district websites, social media channels and direct messaging to parents and media. The district leadership held live streamed meetings. Live streamed meetings were publicized and made accessible to all stakeholders. The Director of Schools gathered feedback during his weekly conference call with a county COVID task force comprised of the Sheriff, Mayor, CEO of Northcrest Hospital, Chief of Operations of the Emergency Management Agency, and the Director of the Robertson County Health Department. We hosted the following public ESSER information sessions and presentations:

- Virtual Staff Meeting-June 23, 2021
- School Improvement Planning Session-June 24, 2021
- School Improvement Planning Session-July 15, 2021
- Administrative Retreat-July 19 & 20, 2021

Availability of the survey was communicated to all Robertson County staff and parents through a School Messenger text and follow-up email, in an effort to connect with and inform as many stakeholders as possible. We solicited public feedback from community and civic organizations using our network partners to extend our reach throughout the county.

2

Provide an overview of how the public stakeholder input was considered in the development of the LEA's plan for ARP ESSER funds.

Robertson County Schools used a variety of methods to distribute information to and gather feedback from stakeholders regarding our Health and Safety Plan. A Community Feedback Survey was distributed to gather feedback with respect to our Health, Safety, and Continuity of Services Plan. The main purpose of the survey was to determine stakeholder thoughts concerning the most important needs in our schools when thinking about the health and wellness of our students. Stakeholders were asked to rank the following ESSER 3.0 plan components by importance:

- The district should provide a health and wellness location for students and staff members.
- The voluntary use of masks should be a continued practice in Robertson County Schools.
- Physical distancing should be promoted to minimize the spread of illness.
- Personal health practices such as hand hygiene should continue to be encouraged.
- Schools should maintain a safe and clean environment for all students and staff.
- Schools and classrooms should have adequate ventilation to promote good health.
- The district should host weekend vaccination events.
- Vaccinations should continue to be offered for faculty and staff during the instructional day.

In an effort to connect with and inform as many stakeholders as possible, we solicited public feedback from community and civic organizations using our network partners to extend our reach throughout the county. Public feedback and comments were received from the following stakeholder groups:

- Students
- Families
- Elected Officials and School Board Members
- School and District Administrators
- Special Education Administrators
- Principals
- School Leaders
- Other Educators
- Civil Rights Organizations
- Disability Rights Organizations
- Interest Group(s):
 - Students with Disabilities
 - English Learners
 - Children Experiencing Homelessness
 - Children in Foster Care
 - Migratory students
 - Children who are incarcerated
 - Underserved students
 - Other

The survey results showed that respondents ranked the following Health and Safety plan components in the following order of importance:

- 75.3% of respondents ranked maintaining a safe and clean environment for all students and staff as the most important.
- 64.5% of respondents ranked school and classroom ventilation for promotion of good health as most important.
- 64.2% of respondents ranked encouraging personal health practices such as hand hygiene as most important.
- 30.2% of respondents ranked continuing the voluntary use of masks as most important.
- 22.3% of respondents ranked offering vaccinations to faculty and staff as most important.
- 17.3% of respondents ranked providing a health and wellness location for students and staff as most important.
- 16.1% of respondents ranked continuing to promote the practice of social distancing to minimize the spread of illness as most important.
- 9.6% of respondents ranked district hosted weekend vaccination events as most important.

Creating a culture where educators and staff members are supported remains a priority, additionally 34.8% of stakeholders responding to our community feedback survey ranked providing facilities, maintenance, repairs, and upgrades to help keep students and staff healthy and in school as the most important expenditure for reopening safely and remaining open. 17.3% of respondents ranked creating a district health and wellness location as the most important component of our health and safety plan. Based on discussions with the Robertson County Covid Task Force, data regarding the number of employee and student absences, and risk costs through workers' compensation, as well as survey data; funding of a health clinic and supplemental nurse to be located within the district was added to our Health and Safety Plan. The main objective for the district health clinic will be to improve employee/student attendance through efficient medical care leading to growth in student academic achievement.

3 How did the LEA compile feedback during the open comment period for the ARP Plan?

Robertson County Schools has used a variety of methods to distribute information to and gather feedback from stakeholders regarding our Health and Safety Plan. A Community Feedback Survey was distributed to gather feedback with respect to our Health, Safety, and Continuity of Services Plan. The main purpose of the survey was to determine stakeholder thoughts concerning the most important needs in our schools when thinking about the health and wellness of our students. In an effort to connect with and inform as many stakeholders as possible, we solicited public feedback from community and civic organizations using our network partners to extend our reach throughout the county. In addition to the Community Feedback Survey, a district webpage devoted to ESSER was developed and includes basic information on ESSER, frequently asked questions, Robertson County's Health and Safety Protocols, an Overview Webinar, a link to ask questions, and a link to the Community Feedback Survey. The webpage and all other communications are accessible in Spanish as well as English. The website and survey software allowed us to gather feedback online as well as in real-time. Additionally, we were able to view, chart, and filter our feedback and download and share our results in multiple formats. In addition to our online outreach, we hosted four public ESSER information sessions and presentations.

4 How was the input considered during the open comment period time?

- Based on discussions with the Robertson County Covid Task Force, data regarding the number of employee and student absences, and risk costs through workers' compensation, as well as survey data it was determined that funding for a contract with Five Points for health clinic to be located within the district would be added to our ESSER 3.0 Plan. The main objective for the district health clinic will be to improve employee/student attendance through efficient medical care leading to growth in student academic achievement, as well as a reduction in insurance and workers' compensation costs. Additionally, a floating supplemental nurse will be hired to assist with contract tracing, implementation of Covid protocols, and to coordinate with the local health department. The contract may include but not limited to personnel, equipment, pharmacy, medical testing (including COVID testing), immunizations (including COVID vaccine), illness treatment, well-checks, etc. The effectiveness of this project will be evaluated based on a reduction in employee/student absence, as well as a reduction in insurance and workers' compensation costs.
- During one of the public feedback sessions, the high school band and music directors gave a compelling presentation in which they provided data regarding the reduction in band participation and learning loss due to the pandemic. The district Fine Arts Director shared the CDC's recommendations for classes where increased exhalation and droplet spread occur. He requested the funding of musical instruments to eliminate the need to share as well as sound systems capable of projecting and recording sound throughout ensemble spaces providing for appropriate social distancing. Based on this input, funding of the musical instruments and sound systems will be added to the ESSER 3.0 plan. The effectiveness of this initiative will be evaluated based increased band performance and enrollment data.

The above initiatives align with our survey data in which 75.3% of respondents ranked maintaining a safe and clean environment for all students and staff as most important.

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction

5 Describe to the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the following health and safety strategies:

- universal and correct wearing of masks;
- physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);
- hand washing and respiratory etiquette;
- cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;
- contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine;
- diagnostic and screening testing;
- efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; and
- appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.

Robertson County Schools has adopted policies and descriptions on each of the above health and safety strategies in the RCSTN 2021-2022 Health and Safety Plan. Specific policies and descriptions can be located using the Health and Safety Plan button on the Robertson County Schools ESSER webpage.



<https://www.rcstn.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7606&pageId=44936805>

Continuity of Services Plan

6 How the LEA 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.

Robertson County Schools is dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of our staff and students. To ensure that we are following the most up to date health and safety guidelines and precautions we will continue to develop and refine our continuous learning plan operations manual in cooperation with other members of the Robertson County Covid Task Force. The 2021-2022 Robertson County Schools Health and Safety Plan is a framework based on the most up-to-date public health recommendations given the evidence at the time of publication. It is informed by guidance from organizations such as the Tennessee Department of Health, the office of the Governor of Tennessee, the Robertson County Regional Health Department, and the Tennessee Secondary Schools Association. It does not, however, constitute medical advice, and it will need to be adapted in real time as the pandemic evolves. The Robertson County Director of Schools has the authority to make such revisions as needed based on changes or updates to public health guidance. Our updated health and safety protocols can be found using the Health and Safety Plan button located on the Robertson County Schools ESSER webpage.



<https://www.rcstn.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=7606&pageId=44936805>