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

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, was enacted on March 11, 2021. Funding provided to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) helps safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students.

In the fall of 2021, LEAs developed and made publicly available a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. All plans were developed with meaningful public consultation with stakeholder groups. LEAs are required to update the plan every six months through Sept. 30, 2023, and must seek public input on the plan and any revisions and must take such input into account. LEAs also must review and update their plans and ensure they align with any significant changes to CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

The following information is intended to update stakeholders and address the requirement.

LEA Name: Houston County Schools

Date: July 10, 2023

1. **Describe how the LEA has continued to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of the revised plan.**

The LEA continues to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders to consider plan revisions through a variety of means, including but not limited to providing information for articles in the local newspaper, communicating through monthly board meetings and monthly district administrator meetings, providing a survey for students grades 6-12 to be completed at school, soliciting parent input via school communication and social media, soliciting employee feedback district-wide, engaging in ongoing consultation with the local health department, and posting all ESSER documents on the district website.

2. **Describe how the LEA engaged the health department in the development of the revised plan.**

The district school health services staff continues to work closely with the local health department in both the review of and implementation of the plan. Health department personnel participated in the initial community stakeholder meeting and then have been consulted throughout the implementation phase. Health Department officials have served as a source of support for district personnel, answering questions, providing recommendations, and helping refine or clarify processes as needed. Changes in health guidelines are also consistently communicated from the local health department to the Director of Schools, who then forwards the new information to school nurses and administrators to determine the impact on current practices and protocols.

3. Provide the extent to which the LEA has updated adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the following health and safety strategies.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
No significant revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes: • *Students with health needs which place them at high risk will be provided appropriate accommodations as outlined in their 504 Plan, IEP, and/or Health Care Plan.* • *Houston County School District staff, specifically guidance counselors, Family Resource Center, Coordinated School Health, and school health personnel will review the Well-Being/Mental Health and Counseling toolkits as well as the Tennessee Schools: PREPARE (**P**roviding Support **R**eaching **E**ducators **P**arents/Students **A**nd **R**estoring Community with **E**ffective Interventions) developed by TN Department of Education (TDOE) in order to develop local tools for classroom staff to use as they support students' return to school.* • *School counseling staff will facilitate the compiling of a list of school-based and community resources that can be shared with school staff and families.* • *Building administrators will work with school staff to develop schedules and routines that provide a sense of safety while allowing for a structured means of communication to identify students and families in need of additional resources and follow-up.* • *School staff will prioritize social-emotional support for the most at-risk students (those who are highly mobile, in foster care, homeless, have disabilities, and/or live in a low-income household) with services provided by school counselors, Centerstone, the school psychologist, school social worker, and other agency providers as necessary.* *Students with disabilities who must be quarantined will continue to receive educational services remotely to the maximum extent possible, with casemanagers monitoring their progress and documenting their services even when not physically attending school. Services unable to be provided remotely will be made up upon return to school, and IEP teams will determine the need for any compensatory services as warranted.*
Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)
No significant revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes: • *Student and staff groupings will be as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff to the extent feasible.* • *Staff will be discouraged from congregating in lounge areas or other shared spaces.* • *Communal use of shared spaces such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, and playgrounds will be staggered, with increased cleaning and disinfection of materials as feasible.* • *Visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations will be limited.* • *If permitted access, visitors, volunteers, and external groups are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building in proximity with others when social distancing cannot be maintained.* • *Outside agency representatives providing individual student support (i.e. counseling services, behavioral supports, etc.) must be approved at the district and building level consistent with school board policy 1.501 and will be required to follow district protocols for social distancing and mitigation strategies.*

- *Parents/guardians and external group representatives participating in official school business will be required to follow all screening protocols.*

Hand washing and respiratory etiquette

No significant revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes:

- *School staff will teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be used.*
- *Staff and students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.*
- *Healthy hygiene behaviors will be supported by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch trash cans.*
- *Regular announcements will be made in schools on mitigation strategies shown to be helpful in reducing the spread of COVID-19.*
- *Video recordings will be shared with staff, students, and families that include proper hand washing technique, sneezing and coughing technique, face covering use, and other behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.*

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation

No significant revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes:

- *A daily cleaning schedule will be followed for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection of all school buildings/classrooms.*
- *School staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) will be limited when possible, or cleaned between uses.*
- *Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face covering).*
- *Staff will discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.*
- *Each child's belongings will be separated from others' and kept in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.*
- *Staff will ensure there are adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.*
- *Staff will avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids as much as possible. If these items are shared they will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.*
- *Drinking fountains will not be utilized, and staff and students will be encouraged to bring their own water.*

- *Water-filling stations will be utilized with adult supervision.*

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine

No significant revisions have been made to the most recently updated plan which currently includes:

- *Staff and families of sick students will be advised to follow the CDC's criteria and home isolation guidance. Staff and students should stay home if they are sick, showing symptoms of COVID-19, tested positive for COVID-19, or are running a fever of 100.4°F or above. Staff and students should also stay home if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. Attendance procedures for determining excused absences will be modified.*
- *Staff and families of students should notify school officials if they or students become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.*
- *Staff or students who have COVID-19 symptoms will be separated from other staff and students immediately. The school nurse or designated staff members will care for them using Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions. These individuals will be sent home or to a healthcare facility, following established procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick, depending on the severity of their symptoms.*
- *If an individual (teachers, staff members, students) who has been in school has tested and been confirmed to have Covid-19:*
    - *The school will request that students/staff not return to school until the determined quarantine is complete and the case has been fever-free for 24 hours with improved symptoms.*
- *If an individual (teachers, staff members, students) displays Covid-19 symptoms:*
    - *Individuals with fever or 2 or more Covid-19 symptoms will be sent home for 24 hours.*
    - *Students with fever/symptoms of Covid-19 will remain in the quarantine room until they are sent home. Schools will encourage parents to follow the recommendations of their child's healthcare provider or TN Department of Health.*

Diagnostic and screening testing

No revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes:

- *Staff and students with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be isolated and re-checked within 30 minutes prior to being sent home.*

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

No revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes:

- *The district office will coordinate and communicate vaccination information and opportunities shared from the local Department of Health with all school employees.*
- *Updated CDC guidance and DOH guidelines will be shared in a timely manner with families through a variety of methods including flyers sent home, school and district social media platforms, and district automated calls*

Universal and correct wearing of masks
No significant revisions have been made from the initial plan which currently includes: • *When community Covid levels are high, staff are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building or on buses in proximity with others when social distancing cannot be maintained as advised by the local Health department.* • *All students are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building or on buses in settings where social distancing is not possible. When outdoors, face coverings may be removed as long as social distancing can be maintained.* • *Information will be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Proper use will be taught and reinforced in schools.* • *Face coverings will not be expected for anyone who has trouble breathing or who is unable to remove the covering without assistance.* • *School dress code standards will apply to any designs/logos on face coverings.* • *Information will be provided regarding new guidelines for mask use and quarantine prevention.*

4. **Provide a current description as to how the LEA is ensuring continuity of services including but not limited to services that address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.**

Each school leadership team has put in place school-specific academic supports for students during periods of absence caused by illness and/or quarantine that are based on the student and family's resources and needs. Supports may include, but are not limited to, extended time to complete assignments, missed content shared virtually, paper packets provided directly to families, teacher consultation with the student/family, tutoring opportunities upon return to school as well as other appropriate supports. To address mental health and social/emotional needs of staff and students, two new positions are being funded, as the district has now employed its first-ever school social workers as well as a part-time Student Support Coordinator. An LEA team also participated in the Comprehensive School-Based Supports training. Additional nursing staff has been employed to address health needs of students and staff. All students have access to free school breakfasts while the Family Resource Center continues to provide weekend meal supplements to students in need.