

# Richland School District Two

## RETURN TO IN-PERSON PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education provided an additional \$121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund). This legislation awarded grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had and continues to have on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

South Carolina received \$2,112,051,487 in ESSER III funds from the Act, with 90 percent being awarded to school districts with amounts determined in proportion to the amount of Title I, Part A funds they received in summer 2020 from funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The remaining funds will be used for state-level activities to address issues caused by COVID-19.

This plan describes how the LEA or district will provide a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. This report template complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP Act (Public Law 117-2), the [ESSER III grant](#) terms, conditions, and assurances (CFDA Number 84.425U), and the interim final rule established by the U.S. Department of Education, [86 FR 21195](#).

### Maintaining Health and Safety

#### Overview

A district's plan must include how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies or practices and a description of any such policies or practices, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations including: universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for 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, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to

health and safety policies or practices; and coordination with state and local health officials.

### **Description of maintaining health and safety**

Based on updated guidance released by S.C. DHEC for the 2023-2024 school year, Richland Two developed an updated [Health & Safety Protocol](#) that was shared with employees and parents.

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

When circumstances require specific policies or practices designed to protect the health and safety of students, 504 and IEP teams will determine if modifications and/or reasonable accommodations are needed for individual students with disability-related issues.

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

During the development and implementation of the Reopening School Plan for the 2020-2021 school year, district officials followed CDC and S.C. DHEC guidance. Multiple meetings were held with representatives from S.C. DHEC and the medical community. This collaboration continued through the 2021-2022 school year. For subsequent school years, Richland Two's Coordinator of Health Services has kept district administration informed of the latest guidance from S.C. DHEC.

## **CONTINUATION OF SERVICES**

### **Overview**

Districts must describe how the LEA will 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, which may include student health and food services.

### **Continuity of Services**

Richland Two resumed in-person instruction five days a week on March 22, 2021, and has continued without interruption into the current school year. The district, as an approved e-learning district by the S.C. Department of Education, has only utilized school/district-wide e-learning instruction in emergency situations such as inclement weather or utility interruptions, and this usage has been very limited.

Through the district's school choice program, parents can apply to enroll their middle or high school student in the Richland Two Virtual School. The district discontinued the virtual program for elementary students after the 2021-2022 school year. Our

experience with the program confirmed the research which indicates in-person learning is a stronger instructional model for younger learners than a virtual program.

For students who are absent due to COVID, the following procedures are in place:

#### Attendance Coding

Attendance for students who are isolated due to testing positive for COVID-19 will be coded as SC-VTP (virtual present) so long as the student: (1) provides documentation of positive test results and (2) submits assigned work or participates in assigned activities in accordance with the teacher's directions.

Students enrolled in high school courses and are coded as SC-VTP are granted credit for seat time.

#### Academic Engagement

Students who are isolated due to a COVID-19 infection (and feel well enough to engage academically) will have access to academic assignments during their absence.

#### *Pre-K and Kindergarten*

Pre-K and Kindergarten students will complete Choice Board assignments unless otherwise designated.

#### *Grades 1 through 5*

Assignments for students in grades 1 through 5 will be posted in Google Classroom. Students may also access *MyPath* and *DreamBox* using their Chromebooks. Additionally, real-time academic assistance is available through [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com).

#### *Grades 6 through 12*

Assignments for students in grades 6 through 12 will be posted in Google Classroom. Students also have access to [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) for real-time academic assistance. Additionally, students/parents may contact their teachers to request access to *Edgenuity*, a web-based learning platform.

All assignments are due within 5 days of the date the student returns to school

To assist students with recovering lost instructional time since the pandemic began, Richland Two has implemented multiple solutions

During the summer of 2021, 2022 and 2023, Richland Two is offered multiple learning opportunities:

- SOAR — Summer Opportunities for Academic Readiness (SOAR) is an extended learning opportunity focusing on English/language Arts and mathematics instructional areas in the elementary and middle levels. High school students have the opportunity to preview upcoming core courses in English, mathematics, science, United States History, or ACT/SAT/WIN preparation.
- Summer Reading Camp — Summer Reading Camp (SRC), mandated by Act 284 Read to Succeed (R2S) Legislation, is a program designed for elementary students who are performing significantly below grade level in reading. The program focuses primarily on literacy instruction and literacy-based thematic units of study in other content areas.
- Middle/High Summer School — Based on the South Carolina Department of Education and Richland Two policies, students who do not pass the core academic courses may attend summer school for the chance to pass the required classes to be promoted to the next grade.
- Summer Support Services — Services are provided to students whose IEP team has determined they are eligible. These services include Extended School Year, Compensatory Services, Summer Testing and Speech Camp.

To further assist students with higher needs for academic recovery, the district has offered Extended Learning Days during the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years from November through May.

## **PERIODIC REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Districts are required to 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, including seeking public input and taking such input into account in determining whether to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

If a district developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that was made publicly available and was developed with public comment but does not address each of the required aspects of safety established in the ARP Act, the district must, as part of the required periodic review, revise its plan consistent with the ARP Act requirements no later than six months after it last reviewed its plan.

### **Periodic Updates**

Prior to transitioning between the phases of the Reopening Schools Plan, the district's Back-to-School Task Force met to review the implementation plan and consider any needed adjustments. The task force considered input received from employees, parents and medical professionals when making adjustments to the plan.

In July 2021, district administrators reviewed the latest guidance from the CDC and S.C DHEC and recommended changes to district practices and procedures based on any changes in the guidance. As provided during the development of the initial Reopening Schools Plan, district partners had the opportunity to provide public input prior to the finalization of health and safety procedures for the 2021–2022 school year. During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Richland Two periodically reviewed and, as needed, revised its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan was reviewed at least every six months, and the school system sought and took into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions addressed updated CDC and SCDHEC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any were issued.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

### **Overview**

The ARP Act requires that school districts make their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online and that the plans be in an understandable and uniform format; to the extent practicable, are 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. Before making its plan publicly available, school districts must seek public comment on the plan and develop the plan after taking into account public comment.

### **Public Input**

The Reopening Schools Task Force was charged with assessing the potential challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic in order to make recommendations for the safe return of Richland Two students and employees.

The Task Force was convened in May 2020 and included a diverse group of 100 partners representing all facets of the district. Because of the possible far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, an interdisciplinary approach drawing on expertise from across the district was essential. Members of the task force represented student health,

academics, special education, extracurricular activities, technology and innovation, human resources, administrative services, operations, assessment and accountability.

Multiple surveys were administered during the summer of 2020:

- [June 1–8 Reopening Schools Survey](#)
- [July 1–12 Reopening Schools Survey](#)

In addition to the surveys, Richland Two Board of Trustees provided an online form for Public Participation at virtual board meetings held in August, September, October and November 2020. The comments submitted via the online form were read to the board by a district employee during the virtual board meetings.

The superintendent and members of the Superintendent’s Cabinet received input about the Reopening School Plan and the implementation of the plan during monthly meetings with the Superintendent’s Faculty Advisory Council and multiple meetings during the 2020–2021 school year with the Superintendent’s Support Staff Advisory Council, Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council, the Northeast Richland Ministerial Alliance and the Richland Two Business Education Alliance.

On November 30, 2020, Richland Two launched the [Let’s Talk platform](#), which helped streamline the process of receiving and responding to input on multiple topics including the reopening of schools.

In July 2021, district administrators reviewed the latest guidance from the CDC and S.C DHEC and recommended changes to district practices and procedures based on any changes in the guidance. As provided during the development of the initial Reopening Schools Plan, district partners had the opportunity to provide public input prior to the finalization of health and safety procedures for the 2021–2022 school year and during the periodic review process of the plan through September 2023.

Updated: 11/29/2023