RUSSELL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

American Rescue Plan (ARP)/Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) PLAN

(Revised: November 2024)

Prior to formulating the ARP ESSER LEA Plan, the Russell County School District conducted an extensive course of meaningful consultation with required stakeholders. First, a community-wide survey was administered for a six-day period from July 22 through July 27, 2021 to ensure equitable and timely feedback concerning the prevention, preparation, and response to COVID-19 and its ramifications on the reopening of our schools. Stakeholder feedback was solicited from students, parents, teachers, community members, businesses, KEA representatives, and city and county leaders. Secondly, an intentional effort was given to reach out individually to minority populations such as English Learner (EL) families who are already at a higher risk for learning deficits due to their language barrier. Our EL families noted that Extended School Services and interventions would be very important in the coming year. Lastly, Superintendent Michael Ford and other district administrators conducted interactive interviews on our two local radio stations, WJRS 104.9 and The Wave 92.7, to further inform the community about the formulation of our ARP ESSER Plan and to seek additional input on the needs of the community and how we can best serve those needs as we prepare to reopen and stay in school.
Superintendent Ford also spoke at the July 2021 meeting of the Russell County Chamber of Commerce regarding our plan and provided a survey to the Chamber members as well.

Survey results yielded the following data in our pursuit to gather necessary stakeholder feedback pertaining to the safe reopening of Russell County Schools. When asked to provide input regarding Russell County Schools' use of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and safe return to in-person instruction, the top priority was to begin and stay in school for in-person instruction and to ensure this was

possible through continued efforts of sanitation and class/group size reduction. Stakeholders also addressed the need for interventions during the regular school day, as well as, during Extended School Services, in order to mitigate learning loss and to attenuate for the mental health needs of students. Stakeholders further insisted upon acceleration opportunities for students who were not at risk of falling behind.

Preventing COVID-19

STRATEGIES for EVERYDAY OPERATIONS

Schools and ECE programs take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, as well as, respiratory viruses, including flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

A. Ventilation

- Air purifiers are available in locations with no air exchange to the outdoors.
- The usage of air handlers to optimize outdoor air exchange.

B. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

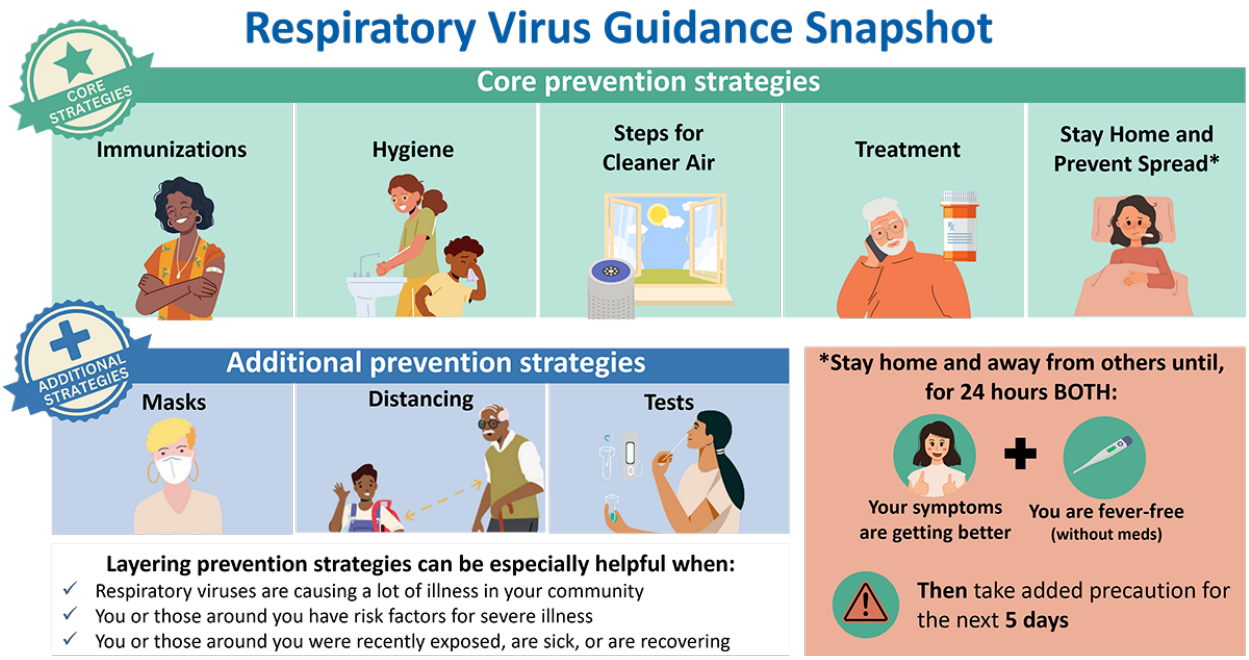
- Promote handwashing with soap and water or use of hand sanitizer. Ensure adequate supplies and opportunities for hand hygiene.
- Teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

C. Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

- Frequently, high-touched surfaces are routinely cleaned using CDC approved disinfectant.
- The district will ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices, i.e. “fog” machine.

D. Masks

- Anyone who chooses to wear a mask will be supported in their decision to do so.



CDC's respiratory virus guidance consists of 5 core and 3 additional prevention strategies.

[Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools]

[CDC's respiratory virus guidance]

Preparing for COVID-19

As the Russell County School District prepared for the reopening of schools in the 2021-2022 school year, we were very cognizant of the academic impact of lost instructional time during the previous year. Furthermore, as a 100% free/reduced school district due to high poverty demographics, we had heightened concerns about the sustainability of academic skills acquired during virtual learning. In our efforts to mitigate this learning loss, we continued to enhance our usage of Google Classroom as our virtual platform by purchasing and incorporating *Google Workspace for Education Plus* into daily lessons and assessments. The majority of ESSER I funds were spent to ensure our technological capacity was 1:1 (iPads for every K-1st grade student and Chromebooks for every 2nd-12th grade student). Additionally, we purchased internet hotspots throughout the community, as well as, Mifi devices for homes that could not afford internet service and/or did not have access to community hotspots. These initial efforts afforded us the opportunity to provide seamless learning experiences at home during school closures due to COVID. Furthermore, this early preparedness provided the foundation for blended learning and the fluidity to transition from in-person to virtual learning with minimal interruptions in coursework. To ensure these remediation and interventions were successful, we hired 5 full-time, certified Intervention Specialists to work with students one-on-one and/or

in small group settings.
Funding for these five positions were allocated through the 2023-2024 school year. Additionally, we hired 11 full-time Instructional Assistants for each First Grade classroom within the district (RSES=5; JES=3; and SES=3). It was our intent to mitigate early childhood loss of learning which forms the permanent foundation for the progression of literacy, mathematics, and critical thinking skills along the learning continuum. The additional positions ended with the 2023-2024 school year.

The implementation of evidence-based interventions will continue to be paramount in diminishing academic deficits incurred as a direct result of previous COVID-19 restrictions in schools and the classroom teacher's inability to effectively group students and closely monitor their progression. ARP ESSER Funds were utilized to purchase various instructional support materials with the intent of targeting academic deficits and mastery of grade level content standards. The following researched and evidenced-based interventions and strategies were funded (if required) and implemented through teacher training and used with fidelity to mitigate COVID-19 loss of learning and its associated mental health issues:

(1) Reading Plus
Reading plus® adolescent literacy. WWC | Reading Plus®. (n.d.). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/EvidenceSnapshot/419.

(2) Lexia Reading
Lexia reading beginning reading. WWC | Lexia Reading. (n.d.). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/EvidenceSnapshot/274.

(3) MAP Benchmarking Assessments
Cordray, D., Pion, G., Brandt, C., Molefe, A., & Toby, M. (2012, December). The Impact of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Program on Student Reading Achievement. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

(4) Leveled Literacy Interventions (LLI)
Leveled literacy intervention beginning reading. WWC | Leveled Literacy Intervention. (n.d.). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/EvidenceSnapshot/679.

(5) Data Driven Instruction
Gleason, P., Crissey, S., Chojnacki, G., Zukiewicz, M., & Silva, T. (2012, December). Evaluation of Support for Using Student Data to Inform Teachers' Instruction. National Center for Education Research & Evaluation, LLC.

(6) Hattie's Visible Learning
Marcus, J., Klute, M., Schaefer, V., Pellerin, E., Peery, B., Shibre, E., Biagas, K., Mislevy, J., & Wilkerson, S. (n.d.). Research-Based Strategies for Effective Remote Learning: Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Feedback. Institute of Educational Sciences.

(7) Before/After School Tutoring with Certified Staff
Nickow, A., Oreopoulos, P., & Quan, V. (2020, July). The Impressive Effects of Tutoring on PreK-

12 Learning: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence. Northwestern University.

(8) Formative Assessment

Klute, M., Apthorp, H., Harlacher, J., & Reale, M. (2017). Formative assessment and elementary school student academic achievement: A review of the evidence (REL 2017–259). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central.

(9) Imagine Learning

Russo, M. (2017, November 30). *The effectiveness of imagine learning as a Tier II Intervention.* ProQuest LLC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED588547.

(10) IXL Math

See the evidence. IXL. (n.d.). https://www.ixl.com/membership/teachers/research.

(11) Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

Center on PBIS: Resource: Examining the evidence base for school-wide positive behavior support. Center on PBIS | Resource: Examining the Evidence Base for School-Wide Positive Behavior Support. (n.d.). https://www.pbis.org/resource/examining-the-evidence-base-for-school-wide-positive-behavior-support.

(12) Sanford Harmony

Social emotional learning (SEL) program, activities & curriculum. Harmony. (2021, July 8). https://www.harmonysel.org/.

Responding to COVID-19

In addition to the above-mentioned interventions for mitigating academic and mental health concerns, Russell County Schools will continue to increase its efforts in responding to social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students. According to the School Mental Health Assessment Research & Training Center (SMART) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), "The proportion of emergency visits for mental health issues for youth 12-17 increased by 31% during the pandemic" (www.k12.wa.us). It is incumbent upon the school district to provide support for the social and emotional health of our students affected by the pandemic. We intend to continue utilize our Extended School Services, both "before" and "after" school, to provide opportunities for students to re-engage in social environments. One such endeavor will involve a local organization, Artworks, which specializes in using artistic thinking to promote emotional well-being and stability through art expression. Another method for promoting social/emotional well-being will occur through the implementation of *Sanford Harmony*, a CASEL select program that develops key social and emotional competencies in the classroom, at home, and/or in extended school settings. Students at the elementary level also receive mental health supports from *Satchel Pulse*, an adaptive educational mental health and school safety program designed to provide Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities, universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, interventions, and progress monitoring tools. Russell

County Middle School students receive SEL support through *Second Steps*, a fully loaded program that addresses current social and emotional issues relevant to middle schoolers and an additional school counselor was added starting with the 2024-2025 school year . Russell County High School utilizes *Sources of Strength* to support their SEL needs concerning suicide, bullying, and substance abuse, as well as, empowering teens to care about their impact in the world.

Post COVID, Russell County Schools has focused on High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIR). Specifically, school and district administration had training with representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education regarding HQIR this past summer with follow-up in each individual school. The district has also implemented "KAGAN Structures" having had a 2 day training for all certified personnel summer of 2023, a one day training summer of 2024 and another training scheduled for summer of 2024.

Plan for Spending Remainder of Funds

Based upon stakeholder feedback and discussion, the Russell County School District spent the remainder of its ARP ESSER III Funds in the following manner:

- Continuation of Extended School Services at all 5schools for 5 days per week beginning on Monday, August 23, 2021; funded for a minimum of 2 years ***Ceased at the end of the 23-24 SY***
- Modifications/upgrades of science labs across the district (beginning at Russell County High School) ***Project Completed***
- Providing transportation for any student attending Extended School Services years ***Ceased at the end of the 23-24 SY***
- Hiring of an additional Home/Hospital Instructor ***Continued with Other Funds***
- Continuation of contract for additional School Mental Health Specialist ***Continued with Other Funds***
- Providing instructional support materials for closing achievement gaps across content areas and grade levels, including textbooks, for replacing outdated and/or missing materials ***Continued with Other Funds***
- Providing teacher training for the implementation of necessary intervention methods and strategies (consultants, travel, lodging, registration fees, etc.) ***Continued with Other Funds***
- SEL resources and training ***Continued with Other Funds***
- Purchase of 9 school buses. The school buses will have air conditioning complete with cabin air filters that provide for cleaner/safer environment for all school bus occupants. ***Order Complete***

Plan for Spending Remainder of Funds (Construction Related)

- Russell Springs Elementary School: Russell Springs Elementary School opened during the 2000-2001 school year and the current HVAC system was original to the school. Russell County Board of Education approved a HVAC project for Russell Springs Elementary School in the amount of $1,110,086.24 (including prevailing wages) – furnish and install BACnet Controls, replace 8 full pump suction diffuser triple duty valves, and five units FULL DX Circuit Replacement and five-wheel replacement and VFD's (only addition forthe gym unit) and each classroom will have return air filters installed as part of the HVAC renovation. (BG1 approved) ***Project Completed***
- Old Area Technology Center: Russell County Schools old area technology centeris being repurposed for a multi-use facility. It will house some extra-curricular teams such as cheerleading but also serve as a space for Russell County Schools "LakerSuccess Academy" (an alternative learning environment for students that need flexible scheduling). It will also house the district's gifted/talented department, special education offices, NJROTC rifle range, etc. The roof was in disrepair and needed replaced. There are multiple leaks throughout the building that negatively impact air quality. Scope of Work: Installation of the new Polyurethane / Silicone Roof System on approx. 22,156 sq. ft-$337,177.00 (with prevailing wage) (BG1 approved) ***Project Completed***
- The Russell County Board of Education Central Office has needed a roof replacement for many. There are many ceiling tiles damaged throughout the building due to constant leaks and the leaks negatively impact air quality. Scope of Work: Installation of the new EPDM Roof System on approx. 6,800 sq. ft-$194,323.00 (with prevailing wage) (BG1 approved) ***Project Completed***
- Alternative School/NJROTC: The existing building that houses the alternative school for both middle school and high school students as well as the classrooms for the NJROTC program needs a new roof. The existing roof has many leaks that negatively impacts air quality. Scope of Work: Installation of the new Polyurethane / Silicone Roof System on approx. 6,300 sq. ft.-$119,976.00 (with prevailing wage) (BG1 approved) ***Project Completed***
- Russell County Schools Auditorium / Natatorium Complex: The dehumidification unit is original to the building that opened in 2009 and is beyond its life expectancy. The unit has been worked on multiple times and is now at the stage that it requires replacement. This project includes replacement of the existing Seresco (dehumidification) unit at the Russell County Schools Auditorium/Natatorium that serves our middle school 6th grade students along with the district's use of the auditorium and swimming pool. The dehumidification unit impacts air quality and is required for proper HVAC operation-$310,432.59 (with prevailing wage) (BG1 approved) ***Project Completed***
- District Wide Security Camera System: Replacement of any existing security cameras (currently only at middle and high school) and installation of district wide system that will allow remote monitoring. Promotes school security and creates a safer environment for our students. Research shows that a safer learning environment promotes higher attendance and more engaged learners. Price: $385,191.62. ***Project Completed***
- The current science labs/classrooms at Russell County High School are original to the school. The space is outdated and does not meet current high school

curriculum/instructional needs. Additionally, much of the plumbing for the sinks at the labs no longer function nor does the gas for the burners. A renovation will provide students with additional learning opportunities in an updated environment with additional handwashing stations and lab space that can easily be cleaned, sanitized and maintained. Total Price: $1,919,370.00 **(ARP/ESSER III Funded Portion: $971,368.00)** ***Project Completed***