ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan Guidance & Template

Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, hereinafter referred to as a *Health and Safety Plan*.

Based on ARP requirements, 90 percent of ARP ESSER funds will be distributed to school districts and charter schools based on their relative share of Title I-A funding in FY 2020-2021. **Given Federally required timelines, LEAs eligible to apply for and receive this portion of the ARP ESSER funding must submit a Health and Safety Plan that meets ARP Act requirements to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by Friday, July 30, 2021, regardless of when the LEA submits its ARP ESSER application.**

Each LEA must create a Health and Safety Plan that addresses how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, and which will serve as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. The Health and Safety Plan should be tailored to the unique needs of each LEA and its schools and must take into account public comment related to the development of, and subsequent revisions to, the Health and Safety Plan.

The ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education rules require Health and Safety plans include the following components:

1. How the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, implement prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;

2. How the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;

3. How the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;

b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);

c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;

d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;

e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with State and local health departments;

f. Diagnostic and screening testing;

g. Efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to school communities;

h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and

i. Coordination with state and local health officials.

The LEA's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the LEA's publicly available website by July 30, 2021.* The ARP Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated. The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Each LEA will upload in the eGrants system its updated Health and Safety Plan and webpage URL where the plan is located on the LEA's publicly available website.

The ARP Act requires LEAs to review their Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the 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.

LEAs may use the template to revise their current Health and Safety Plans to meet ARP requirements and ensure all stakeholders are fully informed of the LEA's plan to safely resume instructional and non-instructional school activities, including in-person learning, for the current school year. An LEA may use a different plan template or format provided it includes all the elements required by the ARP Act, as listed above.

* The July 30 deadline applies only to school districts and charter schools that received federal Title I-A funds in FY 2020-2021 and intend to apply for and receive ARP ESSER funding.

Additional Resources

LEAs are advised to review the following resources when developing their Health and Safety Plans:

- CDC K-12 School Operational Strategy
- PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19
- PDE Roadmap for Education Leaders
- PDE Accelerated Learning Thorough an Integrated System of Support
- PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania

Health and Safety Plan Summary: Avella Area School District

Initial Effective Date: June 23, 2021

Date of Last Review: July 30, 2025

Date of Last Revision: January 15, 2025

How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?

Avella will monitor the latest recommendations from PDE, PADOH, and CDC and update their Health and Safety Plan as needed. Board policies will be reviewed and adjusted as needed to assure compliance with the health and safety plan. The plan will be presented to the governing Board for approval when changes are necessary. Facilities and practices will be adapted to the extent possible to ensure that appropriate prevention and mitigation processes are followed. In addition to practicing standard preventative measures such as handwashing, cleaning practices, and the use of PPE when required. Avella will continue to practice standard mitigation efforts to include reducing close contact when feasible.

1. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?

   Educational models will be adapted to the needs of the students as appropriate, including virtual if needed. Social, emotional, mental health and other needs will be monitored and provided by school health providers, social workers and other mental behavior specialists when needed. Food service will be provided using various models as appropriate to the situation.

2. Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
• Universal and correct wearing of masks;	• Avella Area School District will develop mitigation plans in line with the most recent PDE, PADOH, and CDC guidance with plans being updated every six months as needed.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
• Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);	• Determine the maximum capacity for each room. • Balance class numbers as much as possible – remove unused desks and furniture in classrooms; maximize social distancing (to the extent practicable). • Establish distance between the teacher's desk/board and students' desks. •
• Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;	• Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as handwashing, covering coughs, and face coverings when required. • Provide hand soap, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol, cleaning wipes/disinfectant spray, tissues, and paper towels in all classrooms and frequently trafficked areas. • Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread, COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, proper respiratory etiquette and school/district specific protocols. • Perform hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects or materials.
• Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;	• Daily cleaning of schools with soap and water, disinfectants and sanitizers to decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. Provide additional cleaning to frequently touched surfaces and objects including door handles, sink handles and drinking fountains.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
	• At least daily and throughout the day disinfecting schools and transportation vehicles using EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 to reduce the risk. • Use of routine cleaning practices for indoor areas that have not been used for 7 or more days or outdoor equipment. • Follow standard protocols to clean surfaces that are not high touch. • Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
• Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;	• Work with school administrators and school nurses to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms. • School nurses and other healthcare providers should use Standard and Transmission- Based Precautions when caring for sick people. • Contact the local health authority before acting in response to a known or suspected communicable disease.
• Diagnostic and screening testing;	• Encourage staff to stay home if they are sick and encourage parents to keep sick children home.
• Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and	• Appropriate accommodations in compliance with federal and state laws should be made for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and procedures.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
• Coordination with state and local health officials.	• Avella will work together with the Joint Task Force, PADOH, community health agencies and County Emergency Management Agencies to coordinate resources in accordance with their health and safety plan.

Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for **Avella Area School District** reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan on **August 6, 2025.**

The plan was approved by a vote of:

_____ Yes

_____ No

Affirmed on: **August 6, 2025**

By:

_____

(*Signature* of Board President*)

_____

(*Print Name of Board President*)

*Electronic signatures on this document are acceptable using one of the two methods detailed below.

Option A: The use of actual signatures is encouraged whenever possible. This method requires that the document be printed, signed, scanned, and then submitted.

Option B: If printing and scanning are not possible, add an electronic signature using the resident Microsoft Office product signature option, which is free to everyone, no installation or purchase needed.