



# **DISTRICT: Public Plan**

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

*NOTE: If any of your answers to the following questions require additional space,  
please use the supplemental blank pages at the end of this document.*

# DISTRICT: Elizabethton City 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.

Our district administrative team met with school administrators after they engaged with leadership groups within their schools. These groups included principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, school counselors, and teachers (including those working with underrepresented student subgroups). They consulted on our plan for use of ESSER funds to meet the needs of learning loss and improve student achievement. The district team met to consider and prioritize the school leadership team requests and developed a proposal for ESSER 3.0 expenditures. The ESSER 3.0 proposal was posted on the district website with an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback through a survey. We utilized social media, call reach, and news media to communicate with stakeholders our desire for them to provide feedback on our ESSER 3.0 plan. With our call reach system 4,137 calls were made to ECS families requesting them to complete the survey. Through social media (Facebook) we reached 4,372 followers informing them about the stakeholders' survey. News media (Elizabethton Star, WBEJ, and WJHL) provided information to the public regarding the importance of stakeholder feedback and survey location. Mr. VanHuss (Director of Schools) met with students at EHS to review the plan and receive feedback. After the comment and feedback period, our ESSER Grant Manager reviewed and compiled the comments and suggestions then color coded the remarks based on category references. Next, district team leaders reviewed the comments and suggestions to consider the valuable feedback provided. Throughout this process the budget and plan were shared with the school board, city council, and community stakeholders at our June, July, and August school board meetings. Our school board meetings are open to all stakeholders including parents, school staff, students, and community leaders. Community members are given the opportunity to address the board at each monthly meeting. Our school board meetings are streamed live, and recordings are posted on our YouTube channel.

Regarding health and safety strategies for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, Mr. VanHuss (Director of Schools) has been in consultation and collaboration weekly for the past 18 months with the Northeast Regional Health Office and the Carter County Health Department. This partnership continues to be a valuable tool or keeping children in school providing a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff.

The ECS Board of Education approved our ESSER 3.0 application and plans on August 19, 2021. Plans will be posted on the Elizabethton City Schools website ([ecs.schools.net](http://ecs.schools.net)) after submission to TDOE.

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

Our ESSER 3.0 proposed budget and plan was posted to the Elizabethton City Schools website with an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback through a survey. The same proposed budget and plan were shared on our district level social media outlets to provide multiple stakeholders the opportunity to review and provide comment. After the comment and feedback period, our ESSER Grant Manager reviewed and compiled the comments and suggestions then color coded the remarks based on category references. Next, district team leaders reviewed the comments and suggestions to consider the valuable feedback provided.

School health and safety policies were developed in consultation and collaboration with the Northeast Regional Health Office and the Carter County Health Department.

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

We utilized Google Forms to develop a survey which gave us data on the number of surveys completed in total and by various subgroups including elected officials, students, parents, teachers, other educational professionals, administrators, and support staff. The survey also asked responders to indicate their interest group such as student with disability, English learner, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, students who are incarcerated, underserved students, and Civil and Disability Rights Organizations. After the comment and feedback period, our ESSER Grant Manager reviewed and compiled the comments and suggestions then color coded the remarks based on category references. Next, district team leaders reviewed the comments and suggestions to consider the valuable feedback provided.

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

Our ESSER program manager reviewed comments and suggestions after the open comment period time and compiled and color coded the remarks based on category references. Next, district team leaders reviewed the comments and suggestions to consider the valuable feedback provided. Stakeholders were also given an opportunity to address the school board during our June, July, and August school board meetings. The ECS Board of Education approved our ESSER 3.0 application and plans on August 19, 2021. Plans will be posted on the Elizabethton City Schools website (ecschools.net) after submission to TDOE.

### *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.

#### **Elizabethton City Schools Plan for Reopening 2021-2022**

Elizabethton City students will return to school August 5, 2021. Our number one priority continues to be the health and safety of our students while being able to provide appropriate academic instruction and meet students' social-emotional needs. Please note that modifications to this plan may be required based on conditions in our area and/or information from state and local health officials.

#### **Academics**

- The traditional, 5-day a week, daily instructional model provides instruction in-person while adhering to additional safety protocols. The usage of physical distancing within cohorts on a hybrid schedule is not part of our current reopening plans.
- There will not be a "virtual school" option for students this school year.
- Teachers will assess student's current instructional level and adjust instruction to address students' individual needs.

#### **Health & Hygiene**

- Hand sanitation stations will be available in all buildings.
- Hand washing and respiratory etiquette will be highly encouraged.
- Increased cleaning and sanitation of high contact areas are a priority.
- Parents are requested to check temperatures prior to sending students on the bus or to school.
- Training for staff and students on recommended healthy routines will be provided as needed.
- Staff and students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick or running a temperature of 100.4 or greater.
- Face coverings are mandated with an opportunity for parents and staff to opt out.
- Temperature check screenings for all students, staff, and visitors will be completed prior to entry into building.

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**Facilities and Routines**

- No water fountain use. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle.
- Increased cleaning and sanitation of high contact areas are a priority.
- Increased air circulation in classrooms through windows, doors, and air purifiers (as feasible and practical).
- Large group assemblies will be limited for essential purposes only and will follow guidelines (as feasible and practical).
- Only academic field trips that can be conducted safely, given current conditions, will be approved.
- Social distancing within the classroom will be prioritized (where feasible and practical); six feet may not be possible in all classrooms.
- Schools will alter arrival and departure procedures to minimize contact and congestion, as needed.
- Physical activity will be conducted outdoors whenever possible to group students safely.

**Bus Transportation**

- Bus drivers will disinfect buses routinely.
- Students will spread out as much as possible on bus to minimize contact.
- Bus unloading will be from front to back to minimize contact.
- Face coverings are mandated with an opportunity for parents and staff to opt out.

**Cafeteria Procedures**

- Thorough hand washing and/or hand sanitizing will be completed prior to meals.
- Lunch periods will be adjusted, and seating arranged to promote student separation as much as possible.
- Student groups may eat in places other than the cafeteria (where feasible and practical) at the discretion of the school administration.
- Cleaning and disinfecting tables will be conducted between after each class is finished eating.
- Grab & Go breakfast will be provided (as feasible and practical).

**School Clinics**

- Every school in the system has a nurse on staff.
- School nurses will continue to screen students and staff who show symptoms, isolate them until they can be picked up, and follow-up to ensure testing is accomplished.
- Students who have temperature above 100.4 will be placed in a separate area with a mask and monitored until parents arrive.
- Clinics will be thoroughly cleaned throughout the day, as needed.

**Campus Visitors**

- Visitors to buildings during normal operating hours will be limited to appointment only.
- Visitors will be asked to complete a COVID-19 symptom screening upon entry to the building.
- Lunch visitors will not be allowed until lunchroom seating returns to normal.
- Use of school facilities from outside groups will be limited depending on present conditions.
- Volunteers will be allowed in buildings with same screening as staff.

**Student Supports**

- Attendance modifications for quarantined students will be made, as necessary, to support students.
- Students will be screened as needed for mental health support and referred to School Counselors and/or Mental Health Counselors.

**Extended Learning Programs**

- Before and after school extended learning programs will continue at all elementary schools and at the junior high.
- Programs will follow all school safety guidelines.

**Athletics**

- All athletic teams will follow TSSAA mandates.
- Updates will be provided as available from TDOE, TSSAA, and TDH.

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**COVID-19 Procedures for Confirmed Cases**

- If a positive test for COVID-19 occurs in a school with a student or staff member, the district will work with local health department officials and take the lead in notification and contact tracing.
- School administrators will maintain confidentiality in accordance with ADA (American Disabilities Act) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996).
- Students and staff who are fully vaccinated will not be required to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact.
- Potential school closure will be based on the level of risk determined by the district.
- If the need arises to close schools due to COVID-19, virtual learning per state guidelines will be initiated for impacted students as soon as possible.
- If a closure is needed for intensive cleaning, communication will be provided.
- The student/staff member with COVID-19 will be allowed to return to school adhering to TDH guidelines.
- It is our intent for the Health Department to help with contact tracing to minimize disruption to the school setting.
- Classroom/school/district closures will only occur if a significant need warrants the closure or if it is mandated by the state or local health officials.

**Vaccinations**

- Currently, vaccinations are not mandated for faculty, staff, nor students.
- Faculty and staff have been given time to leave work for vaccinations.
- ECS offered a vaccination clinic at Elizabethton High School in collaboration with the local health department and regional health system for adults and students 12 and older.
- Vaccinations are currently available for ages 12 and older at the Carter County Health Department, local pharmacies, and regional health system.

**Accommodations for Children with Disabilities**

- Throughout the 2020-21 school year the district provided a virtual option for students with compromising health concerns as well as specific disabilities. Computers and internet devices were provided to all families to facilitate virtual learning. Students with disabilities were provided services, per their IEPs, both in schools and in the home.
- We expect to begin the 2021-22 School Year all in-person learning. Currently, there is no plan to provide a virtual option. Students with Disabilities who are quarantined will continue to receive services in accordance with their IEP.

*Individual school plans will include specifics that are age and space appropriate and may vary from these general district protocols. As the need lessens, these protocols will expire allowing programs and procedures to return to normal. Please note that modifications to this plan may be required based on conditions in our area and/or information from state and local health officials.*

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## 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.

Based on Tennessee Department of Health guidelines, Elizabethton City Schools will ensure the continuity of services to address academic needs by starting school in person in August. There will not be a virtual option to begin the 2021-22 school year. Based on this plan, we expect to be able to provide all services to students and families in person in accordance with policies, statutes, and all regulations. Common sense infectious disease prevention measures will remain in place based on CDC recommendations and Tennessee Department of Health guidelines.

Elizabethton City Schools will teach TN State Standards in all courses and utilize our Tier II and III intervention blocks to account for learning loss and acceleration. Subgroup services will be provided per IEP/ILP. ESSER 3.0 funds will enable us to mitigate learning loss by hiring additional teachers to reduce class sizes, work with more students in small intervention groups, and serve additional students in grades 1-8 through TN ALL Corps tutoring.

Our social, emotional, and mental health supports will continue at each school with school counselors and a mental health counselor currently in place. It be enhanced by the addition of a mental health counselor, an additional school counselor, career advisors, and a school social worker. Students receive social and emotional health supports during guidance class, small group sessions, and individual counseling. School nurses will continue to address health concerns and conduct any necessary actions regarding COVID-19.

Other supports for continuing services during the 2021-22 school year will be the availability of free breakfast and lunch for all students.

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## SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSES

Should you require additional space to complete your response to any of the above questions, please use these supplemental blank pages. If using this space for multiple answers, leave a space between and ***be sure to include which area you are adding a response to at the beginning.***

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## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSES** *(continued)*

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