

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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*, from now on 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 consider 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 to 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 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 student's academic needs and students and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other conditions, 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 concerning 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 LEA's ARP ESSER grant period. LEAs also must check and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the plan's development, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body before 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 through an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)

Health and Safety Plan Summary: Highlands School District

Initial Effective Date: July 13, 2021

Date of Last Review: August 21, 2023

Date of Last Revision: May 20, 2024

1. 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 operating school facilities to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?

The Highlands School District will consider the most recent guidance for reopening and operating its school facilities from the CDC, PDE, and the Allegheny County Health Department. The district plans to continue with in-person learning for the start of the 2024-2025 school year while operating under specific guidelines outlined in this plan. Students in grades Pre-K through 12 can participate in the district's remote learning platforms if they are uncomfortable returning to in-person learning. The wearing of masks will be optional for students, staff, and visitors unless an Order requires them. The Health and Safety Plan may be revisited and revised as data changes.

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

Students will be provided with their devices to use throughout the school year. Classroom teachers will be provided the same technology as during the COVID-19 pandemic. This technology is critical in a COVID outbreak requiring a temporary shutdown. After-school tutoring programs will be implemented throughout the school year to address the academic needs of all students. The district's MTSS program will support students experiencing a more significant learning loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those students diagnosed with a specific learning disability will receive additional academic support through their special education program. The district will provide meals to all students if a district-wide shutdown occurs due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Otherwise, all students participating in the full in-person learning will receive a free breakfast and lunch daily.

School counselors will provide ongoing social, emotional, and mental health support to those students and staff who require it. Small groups of students will have the

opportunity to meet with school counselors continuously throughout the year as needed. Parents can use site-based therapy for their children if referred by the district's SAP program or their child's physician. The district's Second Step curriculum will be implemented K-8, which provides instruction to students on how to deal with social and emotional issues. The district's behavioral therapists will be available daily to support those students who require more intensive social and emotional services. In addition, those students diagnosed with a mental health disability will receive additional support through their special education program.

District staff will be able to receive social and emotional support through the district's Employee Assistance Program. This program will be available throughout the school year for any staff member experiencing issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, 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

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| a. Universal and correct wearing of <u>masks</u> : | Wearing masks will be optional for students, staff, and visitors unless an Order requires them. The Health and Safety Plan may be revisited and revised as data changes. |
| b. Modifying facilities to allow for <u>physical distancing</u> (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); | Students will continue with in-person learning for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. If a COVID outbreak should occur that requires modified facilities to allow for more structured physical distancing, the district will implement either a Hybrid A/B Cohort Schedule or Full Remote instruction. |
| c. <u>Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</u> : | The district will ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, |

ARP ESSER Requirement

Strategies, Policies, and Procedures

coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be available in all classrooms.

The district will make CDC handwashing resources available, including health promotion materials, information on proper handwashing techniques, and family tips to help children develop good handwashing habits.

The district will ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and tissue) are available in the school setting to support healthy hygiene practices.

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

The district will follow the CDC's Guidance for Cleaning and disinfecting Schools.

Frequently touched surfaces and objects within the school and on buses will be cleaned and disinfected frequently. This includes but is not limited to door handles, sink handles, and drinking fountains.

Ventilation rates will be increased during occupied times to maximize ventilation without causing other IAQ issues.

Electrostatic Spray Disinfectant will be utilized regularly.

Classrooms and common areas will be ventilated with additional circulation of outdoor air when possible, using windows, doors, and fans.

ARP ESSER Requirement

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

- f. Diagnostic and screening testing:

- g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;

- h. Appropriate accommodations for with disabilities concerning health and safety policies; and

Strategies, Policies, and Procedures

The district will maintain records of any persons, other than students and staff, that enter the building.

The district will provide information on the website and in parent flyers/letters.

The district will prepare parents and families for remote learning if a class or school is temporarily closed due to a COVID outbreak.

The district's Pandemic Coordinator will ensure all COVID guidelines are followed regularly. Students and staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID should stay home from school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours.

District staff will stay home if ill.

Students and staff will be made aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID.

Students and staff will go to the nurse if they feel symptomatic.

The district will share resources with the school community to help families understand when to keep children home.

The district will continue to work with local health agencies to offer vaccination opportunities.

The district will keep the local community up to date on vaccines.

Servicing students in low incidence students with disabilities concerning health and safety policies, and programs can be problematic due to, but not limited to, students with medical concerns, students not understanding the importance of wearing a mask, students unable to maintain proper social distance, students requiring hand-over-hand instruction and support, students requiring assistance with feeding or

Strategies, Policies, and Procedures

ARP ESSER Requirement

toileting.

For the reasons listed above, extra precautions will be implemented. These precautions include:

If a sink is available in the classroom, staff will thoroughly wash hands immediately before and after working with a student.

Students will be provided individual instructional tools to avoid communal use to the extent possible.

Personal student iPads/AAC devices will be disinfected to the extent possible.

Bathrooms will be disinfected throughout the school day.

Students with more significant disabilities should be assisted with handwashing to ensure the proper technique is used.

The district will continue to work with the Allegheny County Health Department to receive guidance on quarantine, isolation, risk assessment, and other infection.

- i. Coordination with state and local health officials.

Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for the **Highlands School District** reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan on **May 13, 2024**. A revised Health and Safety Plan was approved on May 20, 2024.

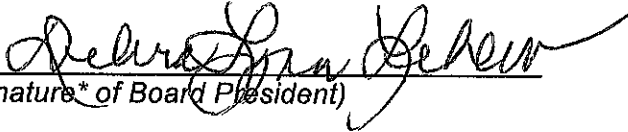
The plan was approved by a vote of:

8 YES

0 NO

Affirmed on: **May 20, 2024**

By:



(Signature* of Board President)

Dr. Debra Lehew

(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.