

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

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, was enacted on March 11, 2021. Funding provided to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students.

In the fall of 2021, LEAs developed and made publicly available a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. All plans were developed with meaningful public consultation with stakeholder groups. LEAs are required to update the plan 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. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools and to ensure the plan is current. 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.

The following information is intended to update stakeholders and address the requirement.

LEA Name: Gibson County Special School District

Date: January 28, 2022

1. Describe how the LEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in development of the revised plan.

The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan developed by the district in consultation with stakeholders for the opening of the 2021-22 school year was successfully implemented with no revisions made. The LEA considered feedback gathered from the September 2021 survey, monthly school board meetings, administrative leadership team meetings, PTO sessions, family engagement opportunities at the school level and social media platforms that offered stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback regarding any necessary changes to our original plan. In addition, the Director of Schools and head school nurse consulted with the local health department on a weekly basis beginning in August of 2021 to stay abreast of COVID related trends pertinent to school operations. The feedback gathered from the health department as well as other stakeholders was utilized in the development and implementation of our plan.

2. Describe how the LEA engaged the health department in the development of the revised plan.

Although no revisions to our plan have been made at this time, GCSSD continues to practice health protocols as established by the CDC guidelines and local health department recommendations. Our Director of Schools and head school nurse correspond with the local health department weekly, if not daily, via email and phone calls to discuss COVID related issues and trends. Through these correspondences, decisions are made regarding current building level practices and any specific actions that need to take place to ensure a safe and healthy setting for our students and staff.

3. Provide to the extent to which the LEA has updated adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the following health and safety strategies.

<i>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies</i>
GCSSD continues to follow established policies and protocols with respect to the health and safety of our students with disabilities. When the need arises, appropriate accommodations will be provided as determined by the 504 and/or IEP teams. Students who are medically fragile may participate in homebound instruction if the school is provided with the necessary medical documentation to support the need. Parents, and other pertinent stakeholders, are provided the opportunity to engage in IEP or 504 team meetings virtually to encourage participation in a safe setting.
<i>Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)</i>
The school district opened the 2021-22 school year following typical classroom procedures and protocols. Physical distancing continues to be encouraged to the greatest extent possible in the classroom and transitional areas of the school building.
<i>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette</i>
Schools continue to provide opportunities for frequent hand-washing and the use of hand sanitizer. Such times include, but not limited to, restroom breaks, recess/PE, and prior to meal service times. Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette (such as coughing and sneezing) are included as a component of classroom procedures and expectations taught at the beginning of the school year and reinforced throughout the year.
<i>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation</i>
The contracted janitorial/cleaning staff, PESG, will continue to conduct daily cleaning procedures and protocol to ensure all facilities are sanitary and safe for students and staff. High traffic areas such as restrooms will receive frequent monitoring and additional cleaning. The district maintenance department will continue to oversee operational needs with improving schools HVAC units to maximize ventilation.
<i>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine</i>
Contact tracing protocols with students and staff regarding isolation and quarantine are followed per health department guidelines. The school district is identifying close contacts of any positive cases coordinated by our head school nurse with the assistance of school administrators and contacting parents of students that are considered close contacts. School nurses provide information to families and staff pertaining to COVID-19 timelines with isolation and return to school guidance per CDC recommendations. The district is mandating isolation for a 5 day period for positive cases and then requesting the student/staff to wear a mask for 5 days upon return. The district is not mandating quarantine for close contacts, but recommends the family to contact their health provider for guidance.
<i>Diagnostic and screening testing</i>
The district provides on campus diagnostic and screening tests to our middle and high school students with parental permission if symptomatic or requested upon return to school from isolation. The same services are provided to our school staff when requested.
<i>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</i>
The school district partnered with the local health department to provide a vaccination clinic event for all school employees on November 12, 2021 and December 3, 2021. Employees were notified prior to the event via email to sign up to receive a vaccination shot. These efforts were organized by our Coordinated School Health Department and allowed employees the convenience of receiving their initial COVID-19 vaccination shot or booster shot to any interested staff.

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Mask wearing is optional in our schools and available for anyone interested. However, if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID, he/she must wear a mask when returning to school from isolation for 5 days per CDC protocol.

4. Provide a current description as to how the LEA is ensuring 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.

GCSSD opened the 2021-22 school year with full in-person learning for all students to ensure success in addressing their academic, social, emotional, mental, and nutritional needs through the various programs implemented in our schools and personnel designated to deliver these services. Spring and fall 2021 data were used as a baseline measure to determine academic gaps in reading and math. This information was used to identify learning loss and skill identification to employ additional interventions in reading and math that will include, but not limited to, before and after school tutoring along with utilizing reading and math interventions during the regular school day. On-going professional development will be provided to certified staff and non-certified interventionists with a focus on supporting continual learning needs for at-risk and/or low performing students as a result of the pandemic. The academic student supports will be provided through small-group instruction, classroom interventions, credit recovery, and tutoring. Our high schools will continue to strive to increase the number of students who are deemed college and career ready and to increase the number of students who are on-track graduates. To enhance this process, our district implemented a 1:1 technology program for our high school students grades 9 through 12. This will ensure equitable access for these students and continuity in their learning opportunities. To aid in the mental and emotional needs of our students and staff, we will utilize program interventions provided by our CSH team, school nurses, and our school social worker. Our school nurses and CSH personnel will continue to identify, review, and update existing processes for students, families, and staff to access health and wellness support services. In addition, school counselors will be readily available at each school site to provide counseling as needed. Our district will continue to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students through the 2021-22 school year to meet students' nutritional needs.