



Augusta County Public Schools

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American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund III Augusta County Public Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Updated: June 1, 2023

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. This plan describes how Augusta County Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Eric W. Bond, Division Superintendent, via email at ewbond@augusta.k12.va.us or by phone at 540-245-5100.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Augusta County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

In addition, Augusta County Public Schools has adopted policies on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Universal and correct wearing of masks
 - Effective February 14, 2022, masks will be optional for students, staff, and visitors. Students, staff, and visitors that wish to wear masks at school may continue to do so.
 - Effective February 25, 2022, masks will be optional for students and staff while being transported on buses or cars per CDC Public Transportation guidance.
- Modifications to allow for physical and social distancing
 - ACPS will follow the CDC recommendations to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to the greatest extent possible and possibly up to 6 feet when feasible.

- Seating in classrooms will be arranged to maintain as much distance as possible.
- Alternate locations within the school building may be used to provide instruction; including the auditorium and gym.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
 - References to proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette is followed as recommended by the CDC.
 - ACPS enforces proper hygiene etiquette through posting of signs in our facilities, educating staff on techniques, and reminding parents through school communication notifications.
 - Additional hand sanitizing stations have been installed at all facilities to provide additional availability for handwashing throughout the day.
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities
 - Facilities are cleaned once each school day. In addition, frequently touched surfaces are sanitized throughout the day.
 - Appropriate disinfectant has been provided to staff to use in sanitization efforts within the classrooms.
 - Ventilation systems are updated, repaired, and improved as funding is made available.
 - HVAC filter changes have increased to 6 times a year to improve air flow and quality within each facility.
 - Water filling stations have been installed in the place of traditional water fountains, eliminating mouth contact and possible contamination.
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine
 - Contact tracing will be conducted as required. Currently the Virginia Department of Health's website states: The COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) expired at the end of the day on May 11, 2023. The end of the declaration does not affect the emergency use authorizations (EUAs) issued for COVID-19 vaccines, tests, or treatments.
 - COVID-19 is still an important public health issue, and you should continue to take measures to protect yourself and your family.
 - VDH continues to work hard to prevent COVID-19, including continuing to monitor and track cases, encouraging testing and treatment, ensuring access to vaccines, and performing outreach to providers and other partners.
 - Schools are subject to Board of Health disease reporting regulations. Any person in charge of a school, summer camp, or child care center is required to report suspected outbreaks of any illness that might be spread from one person to another. Schools should refer to the [Rules and Regulations of the Board of Health](#) for requirements. If a known or suspected outbreak of COVID-19 occurs, the facility should call the [local health department](#) immediately to discuss the situation. The local health department will work with the facility to provide disease control and prevention recommendations to slow or stop the spread of COVID-19. Schools may also use the [VDH outbreak reporting tool](#) to report suspected outbreaks of COVID-19 or other communicable diseases.
 - Any person who tests positive or is identified by a medical professional as being suspected of having COVID-19 and whose activities might have resulted in exposure to others in the school environment should report their positive status to ACPS in order to permit contact tracing, to maximize the safety of others and to minimize outbreaks that may interfere with continued in-person instruction.
 - ACPS will continue to collaborate with local health departments, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with

or exposed to COVID-19. This allows identifying which students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results should isolate, and which close contacts should quarantine.

- ACPS will notify, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible after ACPS is notified that someone in the school has tested positive for COVID-19.

- Diagnostic and screening testing
 - When a student is ill and/or having symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that parents reference the VDH Flowchart for K-12, What to do if my child is ill or exposed to COVID-19, at the ACPS website: <https://augustava.sites.thrillshare.com/page/covid19>
 - Daily temperature checks should be monitored by families as needed at home (e.g. when there are symptoms of illness or fever). School nurses will take temperature checks as needed at school.

- Vaccination
 - ACPS will follow the guidelines of VDH as stated on their webpage: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-faq/vaccination/>

- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
 - In coordination with parents and their medical provider, ACPS provides both safety and education objectives based on each students' individual need. Specific disabilities are addressed when determining appropriate safety measures for each student. As needed, learning opportunities are adjusted to align with those appropriate safety measures.

- Coordination with State and local health officials
 - ACPS continues to monitor the VDH website for possible changes to their recommendations.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Augusta County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to, services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies (accommodations will be determined on an individual basis through the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or §504 plan.)

Since August 10, 2021, all Augusta County Schools have provided in-person learning for five (5) days per week with a minimum of six instructional hours per day. Teachers are continuously evaluating students' preparedness for learning using Virginia Growth Assessment data, guided reading levels, and pre-/post-test data and adapting instruction accordingly. Schools are also providing additional opportunities for after school tutoring and homework support. Students with disabilities are also attending school five (5) days a week and continue to progress on their IEP goals. An instructional specialist has been added to the student services office to help with the instructional needs of students with disabilities. We have added two new social work positions in support of families and social emotional needs of students. Family and School Engagement is one position that works with reengaging and keeping families engaged in school, including attendance. Social Emotional support is being delivered and coordinated with a new position. This position works with students and staff on the needs of students' mental health, including coordinating community support, TDT, and specialized school support. ACPS has hired 4 behavior technicians to work with high needs students who are struggling to self regulate. We continue to look for ways to support our students with instructional, behavioral, and social emotional needs.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Augusta County Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

Augusta County Public Schools presented a return to in-person learning plans/updates at the following public meetings of the Augusta County School Board and heard public comments on **6/3/2021, 7/1/2021, 8/5/2021, 1/20/2022, 2/3/2022, and 12/1/2022**. During those presentations there were opportunities for community members and stakeholders to provide input into the plan. The public will continue to have opportunities to make comments at each regularly scheduled School Board meeting held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. ACPS also sought input from a task force consisting of community stakeholders with differing backgrounds related to public education. Their input was significant in offering a hybrid approach to learning throughout the 2020-2021 school year and addressing changing health guidance to offer a full in-person learning model for the 2021-2022 school year and is ready to meet if any changes are being considered. Community members, parents, school counselors, and social workers all provided valuable input representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness or in foster care, migratory students, and other underserved students.

Community members are always welcome to address ACPS School Board members during the delegations portion of each regularly meeting agenda, via their designated email address provided on the School Board website, or by calling our School Board offices at (540)245-5100. Community members can also communicate concerns to the Division Superintendent via email or phone.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of the Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Augusta County Public Schools will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and Augusta County Public Schools will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

Augusta County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://augustava.sites.thrillshare.com/page/covid19>;
- The plan can be made available in multiple languages, including Spanish, Russian, French, and Chinese;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact ACPS Student Services at (540) 245-5132, to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting ACPS Student Services at (540) 245-5132.