

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services (Revised 11/22/21)

Caroline County Public Schools,



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 Caroline 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 Andrea Ross- Director of Federal Programs and Jeff Wick- Safety and Compliance Coordinator.

Caroline County Public Schools welcomed students of special populations (Students without internet, students who identified as English Language Learners and students with disabilities based on IEPs) on August 24, 2020. All students were provided the option to return to learn on March 1, 2021. Families were surveyed to identify their preference of in-person or virtual instruction for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. Staffing was determined based on survey results to accommodate all learners. While teachers instructed students via the virtual model, all staff returned to their assigned school buildings to continue in-person and virtual instruction beginning Tuesday, January 19, 2021. Students who received in-person instruction were socially distanced, followed mitigation strategies, and received personal devices and instructional materials to limit sharing. All staff and students wore masks at all times with the exception of lunch. Arrival and dismissal procedures were adjusted to accommodate COVID-19 guidelines.

Due to the large number of students who chose in-person learning, social distancing has been decreased to less than 3 feet in most cases. As a result, and in following CDC guidelines, CCPS is implementing layered mitigation strategies to include mandatory mask wearing, hand hygiene (hand sanitizer provided in all classrooms and hallways), water bottle fillers with traditional fountains shut off, improved ventilation, asking staff and students to self-screen daily, asking students and staff to stay home when sick, contact tracing with isolation/quarantine of positive individuals/close contacts, regular restroom cleaning, and signage.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Caroline 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 its return to full in-person instruction. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

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

- **Wearing of masks-** With full in-person instruction required by the state, approximately 95% of students chose this option for 2021-22. Using CDC recommendations as a guide, masks will be required indoors for all students and staff in grades PreK-12.
- **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing** (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)- Based on executive order 79, physical distancing is no longer required. However, when possible, distances between 3 and 6 feet will be used.

- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette-** Handwashing/hand sanitizing will be encouraged throughout the day and before and after meals. All classrooms have hand sanitizer dispensers, so staff and students will be encouraged to use this regularly throughout the school day.
- **Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities-** CCPS held two vaccination clinics in May for students between the ages of 12 and 18--one at Caroline High and one at Caroline Middle. In addition, it communicates with eligible families new vaccination opportunities sponsored by the VDH. In November and December, CCPS, again in partnership with the VDH, will host 1st and 2nd shot clinics at Caroline Middle School for students between the ages of 5 and 11.
- **Coordination with state and local health officials -** When there is a confirmed positive case, the Coordinator of Safety and Compliance provides a line list of positive students/teachers as well as close contacts to the Virginia Department of Health. The VDH also provides assistance with cases that involve unusual circumstances. CCPS also participates in weekly teleconferences with the VDH and follows guidelines that are updated by the department of health
- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation-** A ventilation study was conducted with recommendations for improvement being implemented during the spring semester. Improvements are in progress and will be ongoing to address all. Cleaning continues on a daily basis for occupied areas.
- **Contact tracing** in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments- All positive or potentially positive cases are reported to the Coordinator of Safety and Compliance, who guides the schools through the contact tracing process. Positive persons are required to isolate for 10 days from the date of the positive test or onset of symptoms. Close contacts choose from the three CDC-approved quarantine options: 1) they may quarantine for 14 days from the date of their last contact with the positive person; 2) they can acquire a negative test at least 5 days after their exposure and return after completing 7 days of quarantine; 3) they can complete a 10-day quarantine period and return if they have not developed symptoms. In the event a student cannot be separated from a positive parent, the student completes a 17 or 20-day quarantine (the 10-day isolation period for the positive parent plus 7 or 10 additional based on options 2 and 3 listed above). The Coordinator of Safety and Compliance provides a line list of positive students/teachers as well as close contacts to the Virginia Department of Health. The VDH also provides assistance with cases that involve unusual circumstances.
- **Diagnostic and screening testing-** Parents and staff are asked to monitor their students and themselves for symptoms and to stay home if any are presented. Upon arrival at school, staff will ask students questions, monitor for symptoms, and send symptomatic students to the isolation room. CCPS has applied for the ViSSTA grant so it can conduct pool testing of unvaccinated staff once the OSHA mandate requiring employees to be vaccinated or acquire weekly testing takes effect.
- **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities** with respect to health and safety policies. Students will continue to receive the services as stipulated in their IEP or 504 Plan. CCPS is required to provide the least restrictive environment for each student.
- **Other:** The CCPS Covid-19 Data Dashboard is available on our website. This is updated daily with COVID-19 data for Caroline County and the school system, including PCR+ rate, cases per 100K, and number of students and staff who were positive or a close contact (overall and by school). The dashboard also contains information on our Return-to-Learn plan, school building status definitions, and compliance with the CDC's core and secondary indicators.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Caroline 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.

Academic:

CCPS has been able to maintain face to face instruction at all sites. CCPS has also successfully implemented the Caroline County Virtual Academy for qualified students who desire to remain a virtual learner and that meet the requirements of an effective virtual learner. Interventions to address student learning loss and individual student needs have been ongoing across the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 of the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS). Interventions and supports are monitored through School Support Team meetings conducted by the instructional leadership team from the School Board Office. Additional reading and math services along with before and/or after school tutoring is ongoing to address unfinished learning for identified students. Fall assessment data are being analyzed to provide targeted remediation and enrichment to all learners. The division will follow closely the Virginia LEARNS guides for "Just in Time Instruction" and make the necessary instructional adjustments to bridge previous skills/content to grade level standards. Additional staff have been hired to address student deficits and accelerate learning.

Social: CCPS is using VTSS strategies to support tiered interventions for students' social needs. School clubs have resumed either face to face or via a blended or virtual platform.

Emotional: CCPS is using VTSS strategies to support tiered interventions for students' emotional needs. Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT) services will be provided by outside agencies for identified students.

Mental Health: CCPS schools have a full time School Social Worker assigned to support mental health needs of students and support families with resources. Additionally, Family Engagement Staff were added to each school to support our families. CARE teams were formed at each school, bringing in School Social Workers, School Counselors, School Psychologists and instructional staff together to support the ongoing needs of students.

In the fall of this 2020-2021 school year, CCPS enhanced SEL with a focus on ensuring all schools acquired the training to be fully Trauma sensitive and informed. Three video training modules were developed for staff to view exit tickets requirements in order to gain a full understanding of trauma research, to learn self-care techniques, and to strengthen classroom trauma-sensitive strategies in order to build trauma competency. From February to April, school-based teams collaborated to discuss student-specific needs, and strategies to infuse learned concepts. This sea of change has resulted in CCPS becoming a fully Trauma Informed school division and continues to be an ongoing focus.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

On November 12, 2021, the LEA Plan for Safe Return was posted on the CCPS website for public comment. All comments were submitted electronically to Andrea Ross, Director of Federal Programs and were considered in final revisions.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Caroline 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 Caroline 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

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

- The plan is posted at:
https://www.ccps.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LEA-Plan-for-Safe-Return-to-In.docx_.pdf
- The plan is available in Spanish as this is our highest multilingual population in Caroline County at this time.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Arleen Calhoun-Hicks, ELL teacher, 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 Dr. Paige Carter, Director of Special Education, at pjcarter@ccps.us.
- Enhancement and revisions of the Return to Learn Plan is also shared at the monthly CCPS school board meeting.