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Suffolk Public Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

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 Suffolk 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. Suzanne Rice, Chief of Administrative Services at 757-925-6750.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Suffolk 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 included in the [2021-222 Return to Learn information](#) along with the [SPS COVID-19 Resource Guide](#).

In addition, Suffolk 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
- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments
- Diagnostic and screening testing. SPS is partnering with the VDOE and VDH to host a contracted provider to the division to conduct COVID-19 screenings and testing.
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities. Multiple vaccine clinics have been scheduled and will continue to be scheduled for students and staff of SPS.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies are provided as follows: mask exemption forms are available for review and approval for medical reasons, individual manipulatives are available, medically fragile students being serviced at home, intentional teaching of safety and mitigation strategies using social stories.
- Coordination with state and local health officials.

Details and descriptions for each of these items is included in the [SPS COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

Continuity of Services

Suffolk 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.

Information for Suffolk Public Schools' Continuity of Services is included in the [Back and Better: 2021-2022 Parents' Guide to Learning](#).

Opportunity for Public Comment

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

- Through multiple consultations and meetings with the division's Teaching and Learning department and Student Services department who consistently was being informed and provided input by various stakeholders at all levels, including and not limited to VDOE, VDH, Western Tidewater Health Department, local government entities, division and building level administrators, teachers, and other personnel.
- SPS afforded the public the opportunity to provide input during an advertised Public Hearing session on May 13, 2021 and taking such input into account.
- The public has the opportunity to speak on non-agenda topics at the monthly SPS School Board Meetings.

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

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

Making the Plan Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted at https://www.spsk12.net/departments/finance/coronavirus_federal_money
- 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 Ms. Anthonette Ward, Community Engagement Officer, at 757-925-6750.

***Reviewed June 8, 2023**