

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



American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act – ESSER III Plan

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

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 the York County School Division (YCSD) 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. Vika Stephenson, Grant Coordinator/Writer at tstephenson@ycsd.york.va.us or at 757-898-0300.

On July 23, 2020, the YCSD School Board approved the *2020-21 Return to School Plan*, which was periodically revised throughout the school year and updated with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) as changes warranted or when specific grade levels of students returned to in-person instruction. The plan outlined modifications to normal practice for all division services including, but not limited to, reopening metrics, instructional options, school schedules, new instruction, identification of instructional gaps and student needs, social emotional learning (SEL) and supports, technology, COVID-19 response plans, school operations including health and safety measures taken, transportation, athletics and extracurricular activities, family engagement, and communications.

The York County School Division committed to the safe return to full in-person instruction during the 2021-22 school year and continued to implement necessary measures to maintain the health and safety of all students and staff. The following sections outline the division's current plan for continuing safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.

Maintaining Health and Safety

On May 11, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) redefined categories for community transmission based on hospital admission rates. York County is placed in the Low category. Furthermore, the VDH has also revised guidance for K-12 schools. Both agencies have shifted responsibility away from schools towards individuals and families. Given the shift to personal responsibility, YCSD issued the following guidance to its schools and families in late August, 2022:

Mask Wearing

Student and staff masking is optional.

Physical Distancing

All physical distancing requirements have been removed.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff are encouraged to regularly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When handwashing is not available, students and staff will have access to hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, covering hands and rubbing together until dry.

Maintaining Healthy Facilities

Disinfection

Disinfection of high contact surfaces in common areas and bathrooms has been discontinued.

Ventilation

All YCSD ventilation systems have been designed and constructed in accordance with the industry standard ASHRAE 62.1 Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality and the International Mechanical Code, Chapter 4, Ventilation, which has been adopted by the Virginia Uniform Building Code. While the Standard and the Code have changed over time, the result of the procedure for determining the amount of ventilation air required has remained nearly constant at approximately 15 cubic feet per minute (CFM) per person. Ventilation air is introduced into buildings via the HVAC systems to dilute the indoor air of contaminants.

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At Bethel Manor Elementary, Tabb Elementary, Yorktown Elementary, Waller Mill Elementary and the Grafton Complex, the ventilation systems were designed and constructed in accordance with the Standards and Codes identified above. In addition, bipolar ionization technology was designed and installed into these HVAC systems and was shown to reduce the level of contaminants in the indoor air and allow for a reduction in ventilation air. The bipolar ionization device produces positive and negative ions which attack contaminants in the air stream and kills them. Contaminants killed include viruses, mold spores and bacteria and bipolar ionization has also been shown to effectively neutralize SARS-CoV-2 under certain test conditions. The use of bipolar ionization allowed for a reduction of ventilation air to between 5 to 7.5 CFM/person.

Contact Tracing, Isolation & Quarantine

Contact tracing responsibilities for positive COVID-19 cases involving students and staff members have been shifted from division staff to the Peninsula Health District. Parents, students and staff should treat COVID-19 as any other respiratory illness like the flu.

The Flu, RSV, and COVID-19 are no longer restricted with isolation or quarantine guidelines.

People with symptoms of a respiratory virus should stay home and away from others until symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Once you have been 24 hours fever-free and your symptoms are getting better we strongly recommend the following:

- Students and staff that attend programming during this time may consider wearing a mask around others indoors until Day 10
- If a school or facility is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 that has been difficult to control or is unusual in size or scope, regional and local epidemiologists may apply professional judgment and recommend traditional quarantine and isolation standards be applied until the situation is stabilized ([Precautions When Sick - Epidemiology \(virginia.gov\)](#))

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Made available through State funding, YCSD has a ready supply of COVID-19 home testing kits available through school nurses for staff. (Revised December, 2023)

Efforts to Provide Vaccination to School Communities

YCSD has promoted and facilitated initial vaccination shots for employees. Once vaccinations were made available to children 12 and over, the division organized two vaccination dates to assist parents in quick of distribution to those families desiring the vaccination. The division also made facilities available for local organizations conducting their own shot clinics at no cost to the organizing pharmacies, labs and non-profit organizations.

COVID-19 Dashboard

The division COVID-19 dashboard was discontinued in early April 2022.

Coordination with State and Health Officials

YCSD has an open line of communication with the Peninsula Health Department in case of need to coordinate efforts in case of outbreak, but regular meetings have ceased.

Accommodations to Support Children with Disabilities

The York County School Division will provide appropriate accommodations to support children with disabilities in respect to state and division health and safety policies.

Continuity of Services

YCSD will continue to take the necessary 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. Additionally, the division will continue to provide supports to address the needs of students with individualized learning plans throughout the school year. Specifics of the academic plan for the 2022-23 school year are outlined below.

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In-Person Instruction

The division plans to ensure all students have access to a full-time educational program with five days a week of in-person instruction. Families were provided an opportunity to register with Virtual Virginia if they desired full-time virtual instruction. This option ended in FY22.

Technology Integration

The shift to emergency remote learning due to COVID-19 school closures identified significant gaps in equitable access to technology among students. Therefore, the County School Board and the York County Board of Supervisors approved funding to launch a 1:1 Technology Program for all students in grades K-12. The division identified new programs and improved existing education technology programs for the 2020-21 school year to enhance student learning and provide more efficient and effective school-home communication regarding student learning. Starting in the 2022-23 school year, these devices began serving as a classroom enhancement supported by the following tools. A short description is included below:

- **1:1 Technology Program:** Each student in grades 3-12 will have a laptop or tablet device, either division issued or personally owned, for use in person and at home.
- **Canvas LMS:** Supports all facets of instruction: face-to-face, blended, and online learning. Using this online platform, teachers can create course content, access digital resources, assign and grade student work, provide audio and video feedback, and utilize many other features to support student learning.
- **Microsoft Office 365:** Suite of productivity tools for teachers and students, which include Word, Power Point, Excel, Stream (video), Forms, and Teams.
- **Microsoft Teams:** Videoconferencing software that allows for synchronous instruction, as well as collaboration across the school division with parents, teachers, administrators, and students.
- **Mastery Connect:** Assessment platform available within Canvas. This tool will be used to create online assessments, generate reports and monitor students' learning gaps.

Addressing Unfinished Learning

YCSD will use approximately \$2,015,197 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

- Provide traditional and enrichment summer school opportunities during summer 2022 through summer 2024.
- Provide e-Tutoring opportunities for all students in grade 3 through 12 during FY22 and FY23.
- Provide supports to address the continuity of learning.
- Provide LETRS training and materials for cohort teachers.
- Provide training and instructional materials to support content area instruction in grades K-12.
- Provide instructional resources to support the division's gifted services model.
- Hire an English Language (EL) Coach to support the EL program by mentoring, monitoring, and assisting EL teachers in implementing research-based best instructional practices (FY23 only).
- Hire an Assessment, Compliance and Intervention Coordinator (ACI) to coordinate and monitor processes and requirements for Tired Systems of Support/Response to Intervention (TSS/Rtl) programs.

Mental Health and Social & Emotional Learning

In partnering with our family and community supports, YCSD engages in creating a positive, connected, inclusive, and safe environment to embrace ALL learners through the development of a social emotional learning framework.

Acknowledging diversity is foundational in building capacity for our social and emotional awareness while sustaining an intentional focus on equitable access and academic success. YCSD schools have allocated ESSER III funds to provide mental health and social & emotional learning supports to students and staff. These supports include the following:

- Mental health training for all staff.
- Trauma Informed Practices training for select staff.

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- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) training for select staff.
- Trauma Focused -- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) training for select staff.

Additionally, the division will utilize ESSER II-Set Aside funds to provide mental health and social & emotional supports through mental health professional development and training.

Food Services

Food services returned to pre-COVID procedures in the 2022-23 school year.

Transportation

Bus transportation will be provided to all students who request a ride in our tracked ridership format. Cleaning will follow regular sanitizing and disinfecting procedures.

Other Supports for Continuity of Services

YCSD will use approximately of \$3,201,530 its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below to support the continuity of services.

- Provide resources and training in support of building family and home partnerships.
- Provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment professional development, training, and supports for highly vulnerable populations.
- Provide a Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Summer Academy in the 2022, 2023, and 2024.
- Provide an elementary transition program for students with communication and behavioral needs.
- Provide mental health training to all staff.
- Provide training on interventions for trauma informed practices to select staff.
- Purchase assistive technologies for K-12 communication support and multiple disabilities programs.
- Purchase additional technology for student and staff use.
- Provide communication supports for students with disabilities.
- Hire an Assistive Technology/Autism Services Improvement (ASIT) Coach and a cohort of teachers who will be trained and receive a stipend to support the successful implementation of the assistive technologies in classroom instruction to support classroom teachers.
- Reserve indirect costs as allowed by federal and state guidelines.

Creation of and Timeline for Plan Review

Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER III Plan, YCSD staff conducted consultation in the following ways:

- In July 2021, the York County School Division shared the YCSD ARP ESSER III Stakeholder Survey on the division website for community feedback.
- Stakeholders included students, parents/families, administrators, support staff, and community members.
- Stakeholder groups included individuals who represented students from the most vulnerable populations to include: children experiencing homeless, children in foster care, students with disabilities, migratory students, English learners, and other underserved populations.
- After the completion of the public comment period, SBO staff reviewed the survey results and utilized stakeholder input in order to draft the ESSER III plan.

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award, YCSD 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 6 months from its approval by the school board.

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Making the Plan Available to the Public

The York County School Division has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted on the York County School Division website.
- Through use of the drop-down menu of our web translation tool, the plan may be viewed on our website in multiple languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish. The plan can be orally translated for parents. Contact Dr. Vika Stephenson, Grant Coordinator/Writer at tstephenson@ycsd.york.va.us to request translation services.

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. Contact Termaine Hopkins, Director of Special Education at thopkins@ycsd.york.va.us to request this service.

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