

**Plan for Safe Return
To In-Person Instruction
And
Continuity of Services**

**Dickenson County Public Schools
June 1, 2021**

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 Dickenson 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 Haydee L. Robinson, Division Superintendent at hrobinson@dcpsk.k12.va.us or Dickenson County Schools, P. O. Box 1217, Clintwood, VA 24228.

Summary of Response to Covid-19: Dickenson County Public Schools response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been and continues to be based upon the most up-to-date guidance from state and local health officials as well as the CDC. At the heart of our response has been our students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Our ultimate goal has been to return to in-person teaching and learning as quickly and as safely as possible. At the beginning of the pandemic, our primary concern was to ensure continuity of instruction through the use of a digital learning platform and access to devices for all students.

SECTION 2: MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Dickenson 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 response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Dickenson County Public Schools utilized ESSER funds to purchase Personalized Protective Equipment (PPE), including a variety of masks and face shields, plexiglass dividers for office areas and classroom use, and hand sanitizer and wipes. We implemented procedures for dispensing and returning of instructional supplies and resources safely. We also provided touchless water fountains, thermometers (handheld and stand-alone), Sewage treatment and HVAC systems are being constantly monitored. We modified school schedules, entry and exit patterns in school buildings, modified bus routes, and beginning and end of day procedures. Additional signage in and around the buildings provided students and families with procedures and requirements of mask wearing and social distancing. Chromebooks were provided to students to allow for facilitation of digital learning. Childcare was provided for school staff.

In addition, Dickenson 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 - Correct wearing of masks was mandated on all school property, including buses.
- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding) - Many classroom settings were moved to allow for social distancing as well as the removal of any unnecessary furniture. Several classrooms were blended to allow space for students; a modified schedule allowed for fewer students in the building on certain days; the flow of students through the building was modified and clearly marked to allow for social distancing.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette- Hand washing and sanitizing stations are available throughout the building with proper signage and hand sanitizer available in every classroom; substantial training was provided for staff and students regarding proper procedures and respiratory etiquette.
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation - Schools are closed on Fridays to allow for deep cleaning and disinfecting; classrooms are disinfected daily between groups of students as well as the end of each day; when possible, students remained in one setting throughout the

course of the day, with encore classes (art, music, physical education) traveling to the classrooms instead of students moving.

- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, and regional health departments was established. Isolation rooms were established in every building for symptomatic students; we remained (and continue to be) in close communication with local health department officials.
- Diagnostic and screening testing - A daily requirement of self-screening as well as school-based temperature checks was implemented; a temperature of 99.3 or higher required additional screening.
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities ~ In coordination with the local health departments, all school staff members had access to vaccinations with release time provided; communication regarding student vaccinations and locations within our school facilities has been established.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies- Accommodations regarding mask wearing have been provided on a case by case basis. Teaching staff were provided extensive PPE when working with students that could not be masked due to physical limitations. Modified bus routes to allow for space mitigation were in close collaboration with parents regarding mitigation, health needs, training and support.
- Coordination with state and local health officials - There has been extensive coordination with state and local health officials regarding school opening practices and procedures, school closings, mitigation strategies, and athletics and extra-curricular activities.

SECTION 3: CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Dickenson 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 Needs: Dickenson County Public Schools will provide an extended summer school program for students in grades K-12 in June 2021. Summer professional development opportunities are planned for all staff focused on effective instructional practices as well as training and utilization of our learning management system. Plans for the 2021-2022 school year include expanded tutoring, remediation and intervention opportunities and the use of a progress monitoring tool to identify, diagnose and assess learning gaps

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs: Dickenson County Public Schools will partner with local mental health agencies to provide on-site mental health support and with Behavior Health Services to provide truancy prevention and intervention and act as a liaison between parents, students, and school personnel.

Student Health Needs: Dickenson County Public Schools maintains a concern for student health and well-being, as evidenced by our commitment to a school nurse in every building. Training of all staff regarding COVID symptoms, PPE use, and symptom monitoring will be emphasized.

Food Service Needs: All students were provided the opportunity to receive school meals for all remote learning days and weekends also. Through the use of ESSER funds, additional support and compensation was provided to child nutrition workers and bus drivers who assisted with meal distribution.

SECTION 4: OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

During the development of the School Opening Instructional Plan, Dickenson County Public Schools sought input from administrative staff, faculty and staff. Opportunities for parent and community input was provided during the Public Comment section of regular meetings of the Dickenson County School Board. The Dickenson County Education Association provided additional input regarding the opening of schools. All input was considered in the development of the reopening plan.

SECTION 5: PERIODIC REVIEW AND REVISION OF PLAN

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023) Dickenson 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 the school system 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

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

- The plan is posted at www.dcpcs.k12.va.us;
- 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 Ryan Wallace, Technology Coordinator at rwallace@dcpcs.k12.va.us.