



American Rescue Plan Act ESSER III Fund 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 Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) 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 Mary Lou Roaseau, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Support Services, at (757) 591-4511.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Newport News 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.

The goal of Newport News Public Schools is to provide a healthy school environment to foster greater academic achievement and healthier lives for students and staff.

Before any students could return to school in person, each school division in Virginia was required to submit a health plan to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The NNPS plan outlines the school division's plans for student and staff health monitoring; communication plan with staff, students and families; preparation of student health services; promoting behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19; hygiene practices; protecting vulnerable individuals and preparing for when someone gets sick. Newport News Public Schools submitted its health plan to the VDOE on July 17, 2020.

The NNPS health plan addresses daily health screenings, physical distancing on buses and in classrooms, social distancing; cleaning and disinfecting, the use of face coverings; and restricts mixing groups of students, large gatherings and the use of communal spaces (cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums).

Daily Health Screenings

NNPS implemented daily COVID-19 screenings for all students, staff and visitors to be completed prior to entry to its buildings. Masks are required for all staff, visitors, and students. Physical distancing of 3-6 foot is used in all classrooms and on the school bus. Students eat in their classrooms and must remain 3-6 feet apart. Cleaning and disinfecting are provided throughout the day by custodial staff and air filtration systems are available as needed. Contact tracing is completed by NNPS Health Services Staff and Health Services Contact Tracers in collaboration with the Peninsula Health District.

NNPS Mitigation Strategies

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

- *Universal and correct wearing of masks*
All students, staff and visitors are to wear masks while on school grounds.
- *Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)*
Desks in classrooms were reconfigured to allow for 3–6-foot social distancing as indicated for elementary and secondary grade levels. Elementary students remained within their cohorts throughout the day.
- *Handwashing and respiratory etiquette*
Wellness stations are available in all classrooms which include hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, anti-bacterial hand soap, and adult and child disposable masks. Coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, proper disposal of used tissues and proper handwashing are stressed to students and staff. Posters and signage are used throughout all school buildings.
- *Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation*
Increased cleaning and disinfection is conducted by custodial staff, and air purification systems are available to all classrooms and buildings where the HVAC systems do not meet current ASHRAE standards.
- *Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments*
All NNPS Health Services Staff, Athletic Trainers and Health Services Contact Tracers are trained in contact tracing. NNPS Health Services collaborates with the Peninsula Health District to identify and isolate or quarantine those students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or were a close contact of a person with COVID-19. NNPS follows the VDH Algorithm for Evaluating a Child with COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure.
- *Diagnostic and screening testing*
NNPS is not participating in testing currently.
- *Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities*
NNPS Health Services nursing staff provided vaccinations and care to staff members at participating community vaccination clinics in Newport News. In collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Newport News, NNPS is working to provide access to vaccination clinics for students age 13 and above.
- *Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies*
Children with disabilities who are unable to wear a mask do not have to do so. Care for these students continued in the classroom and clinic as needed.
- *Coordination with state and local health officials*
NNPS collaborates with the Peninsula Health District which works directly with the Virginia Department of Health and the CDC for our COVID-19 guidance.

NNPS COVID-19 Dashboard

Newport News Public Schools launched an online [dashboard](#) in November 2020 to keep families, staff and the community informed about positive COVID-19 cases within the school division. The dashboard provides the number of positive COVID cases by location each week, in addition to eastern region, Peninsula and Newport News transmission data from the Virginia Department of Health, which evaluates statistics weekly to identify reliable trends.

Continuity of Services

Newport News 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.

The NNPS timeline for resuming in-person instruction identified target dates for bringing students back to school in two phases, beginning with student populations who were most in need of in-person instruction and support (self-contained special education students, English Language Learners (newcomers) and students in preschool through third grade). The next phase brought back students in grades 4 through 12 whose families opted for in-school learning.

Academics

Newport News Public Schools is currently utilizing K-12 Diagnostic Tools to identify learning gaps in mathematics and literacy. The plan to target students reading below grade level began in spring 2021 with each school identifying students in grades K-5 to remain an additional 90 minutes after the school day to receive specific instruction by reading specialists, interventionists and teachers. Students with disabilities and English Learners have also been selected for additional support after school hours.

In addition, NNPS has identified students for an intensive 5-week summer program in mathematics and reading instruction in grades K-8. Students were selected for the program based on diagnostic data along with their tier on the NNPS vulnerability index. Indicators for the vulnerability index were selected based upon state indicators and other targets specific to our community. Students who are working below grade level and identified as Tier 3 on the vulnerability index were invited first to participate in the NNPS summer program.

For fall of 2021, the following plans are being implemented to build teacher capacity and close achievement gaps:

- Revision of the K-12 curriculum to include priority standards and alignment to the NNPS Profile of a Learner
- Implementation of the NNPS Instructional Framework and the Professional Learning Strategic Plan
- Implementation of K12 Reading and Mathematics Diagnostic Tools (same diagnostic for all grade levels) and a new assessment system
- Utilization of a blended learning instructional model across the school division to support personalization of student learning and provide needed Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to students who are working below grade level
- Implementation of the K-12 Literacy Plan including, but not limited to, the expansion of reading selections in all media centers with a focus on diverse authors and subjects, increased content area reading books for classrooms, and an eBook Library.
- K-5 mathematics coaching for all elementary teachers and administrators across the division
- Continued LETRS training for all K-2 teachers
- Implementation of the NNPS Virtual Learning Academy to support identified students
- Continued integration of the NNPS Social Emotional Learning curriculum embedded into content and morning classroom meetings
- The addition of 2 more mental health therapists to support students in all schools, bringing the total to 9

- NNPS employs College and Career Specialists to prepare students for graduation, college, work, and the military. To ensure that NNPS is meeting the needs of all juniors and seniors these positions are moving from part-time to full-time.
- Family engagement specialists across the school division work with families to increase family engagement, support student attendance, and promote academic success. Funds from ESSER will be utilized to grow the program.

While NNPS continues to utilize extended day programs, academic tutors, and various partnership programs for after-school academic support, the philosophy of the division is to utilize ESSER funds to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students during the school day. Increasing professional learning to strengthen Tier 1 instruction while providing specific targeted resources for Tier 2 and Tier 3 continue to be the priority for the Teaching and Learning Department for the next three years.

Student Meal Service

Meal service has continued for all students. Menus are available [online](#).

Elementary School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- Breakfast and snack will be delivered to the classroom in the morning.
- Due to the half-day schedule, students will take a lunch and a supper meal home.

Middle School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- Breakfast will be delivered to the classroom in the morning.
- For lunch, students will be offered a hot and cold option daily. Lunches will be delivered to the classroom in grab-and-go containers
- Students will take a snack and a supper home at the end of the day.

High School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- For breakfast, kiosks will be set up in hallways outside of classrooms. Students will come out by classroom to pick up their meal. Social distancing will be practiced.
- For lunch, students will be offered a hot and cold option daily. Depending on how many students are in attendance, a combination of kiosk service and cafeteria service will be used. Grab-and-go containers will be used for both. Students will pick up their meal and eat in their classroom.
- Students will take a snack and a supper home at the end of the day.

Parents/families can pick up meals on Wednesdays when their student is learning from home. Parents can also pick up meals on Fridays for the weekend.

Virtual Learners

For students that are attending school virtually, parents can pick up meals daily. Locations can be found by visiting www.nnschools.org/cns.

Student Transportation

Newport News Public Schools provides bus transportation for students to and from school in each reopening phase in compliance with CDC guidelines.

Physical Distancing

To ensure physical distancing, buses are only able to transport approximately 20-30 students at a time (one student per seat). Students alternate between the window and aisle seating position. Positions are marked with tape identifying where students should sit. Siblings residing in the same household may be seated together on the same seat. Students are loaded from rear to front and unload from front to rear to limit interactions between students. Kindergarten students are seated towards the front of the bus if possible.

Face Masks

Students, bus drivers and bus assistants are required to wear masks on the bus at all times. Drivers have a limited supply of disposable masks for students who attempt to board a bus without a mask. Students who continue to board the school bus without a mask will be referred to school administration.

Cleaning

All buses are cleaned and sanitized following each route. Drivers and bus assistants are required to wipe down all high-touch surfaces and seats after students get off the school bus. A team of trained transportation employees conduct a thorough disinfecting process on all buses on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Routes and Bus Stops

As students returned to in-person instruction, bus routes were developed to ensure students have transportation to and from school. NNPS uses Zone Finder, a user-friendly bus stop web query system that allows parents and students to input a home address and grade level to determine the bus stop closest to their home address. Bus stop locations and times are available in Zone Finder.

Opportunity for Public Comment

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

Newport News Public Schools' Return to Learn plan was developed in collaboration with staff, students, families and community partners. Throughout the development of plan, students, families and staff provided input through Facebook Live sessions, webinars and online comment forms.

In addition, Newport News Public Schools Health Services has a School Health Advisory Board comprised of school members, community members and health care professionals. The Health Advisory Board met periodically and discussed the Return to Learn plan for NNPS.

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

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

The Plan is Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted online at www.mnschools.org.
- Newport News Public Schools offers language interpreting services through Voiance to all families who speak a language other than English. Voiance provides 24-hour access to certified interpreters representing over 200 languages. The plan will be available in Spanish and posted to the NNPS website. The plan will be made available in other languages upon request by calling the English as a Second Language Welcome Center at (757) 283-7823.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Individuals may contact the ESL Welcome Center to request translation at (757) 283-7823; 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 the NNPS Special Education Department at (757) 283-7850.