

American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER III) Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Local Educational Agency Plan Template

Background on ESSER

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER, also known as ESSER III, funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Requirements (IFR) on April 22, 2021 requiring Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) receiving ESSER III funds to submit an LEA Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. If an LEA had already developed a plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the enactment of ARP that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i) but did not address all of the requirements in the IFR, the LEA must revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ESSER III funds. This applies even if an LEA has been operating full-time in-person instruction but does not apply to fully virtual schools and LEAs.

The IFR and ARP statute, along with other helpful resources, are located here:

- April 2021 IFR: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf>
- ARP Act text: <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 School Operation Guidance: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html#anchor_1616080023247
- ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume I: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf>
- ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume II: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>
- ESEA Evidence-Based Guidance: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/guidanceeusesinvestment.pdf>
- ED FAQs for ESSER and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER): https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf

Purpose of the Template

The IFR issued by ED outlines several requirements for all LEAs that receive ESSER III funds, including that LEAs have in place a plan for ensuring safety during in-person instruction (either in-progress or planned) as well as ensuring continuity of services should the LEA or one or more of its schools be required to close temporarily for COVID-19-related public health reasons in the future. LEAs who had a plan in place by March 11, 2021, which incorporated opportunity for public comment and was posted publicly have six months from the date their ESSER III Assurances were completed to update and revise the plans to meet those requirements. Examples of previous plans that may be allowable would be a completed Cal/OSHA or Assembly Bill 86 plan, as long as it meets the requirements previously stated. LEAs which did not have a statutorily compliant plan in place as of March 11, 2021, must create and post this plan within 30 days of completing their ESSER III Assurances.

If you have questions as to which category applies to your LEA, please contact EmergencyServices@cde.ca.gov. Plans are required for all LEAs, regardless of operating status, unless an LEA is fully virtual with no physical location. All plans must be reviewed, and, as appropriate, revised, at least every six months to incorporate new or revised CDC guidance and other changed factors.

This template has been created to assist LEAs in the creation of these plans and to ensure all required elements are met. The following requirements and assurances pertain to both the statutory requirements and the IFR published by ED. LEAs may provide any additional information they believe are helpful in assessing their plan. If you have any questions, please contact EmergencyServices@cde.ca.gov.

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

LEA Name:

Washington Unified School District

Option for ensuring safe in-person instruction and continuity of services:
has developed a plan

1. Please choose one:

- The LEA had a plan, as of March 11, 2021, that is already compliant with the ARP statute and will review and, as appropriate, revise it every six months to take into consideration the additional requirements of the IFR; or

NOTE: If your LEA already has a compliant plan as of March 11, 2021, and has assured such by checking the box above, then you may skip questions 2-4 and complete the Assurance and Contact sections.

- The LEA has amended/created a plan compliant with the IFR using this template and has posted/will post it within 30 days of completing the ESSER III Assurances.

NOTE: If checking the box above that you are using this template to meet the 30 day plan requirements, you must respond to each question in the template.

Please note whether the LEA has a compliant plan and include a link to the plan, or acknowledge that the LEA is submitting a new plan and will post it within 30 days of receiving funds.

2. The LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations, including: 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, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and coordination with State and local health officials.

Describe how the LEA will maintain, or continue to maintain, health and safety policies and procedures. Include a description of any adopted policies and procedures regarding the CDC's safety recommendations (or available LEA website links to such policies). Include descriptions of appropriate accommodations adopted and coordination efforts conducted with outside State and local health officials. Please include or describe current public health conditions, applicable State and local rules and restrictions, and other contemporaneous information that informs your decision-making process.

In order to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, the following measures were taken and will be implemented again if necessary:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was provided to staff at all district facilities.
- Offices, Buildings, and other commonly used spaces were cleaned and procedures were updated to meet Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) guidelines.
- COVID 19 testing available at all sites for staff, students, and the community.
- Bi-weekly health staff meetings to review COVID 19 protocols.
- Monthly COVID 19 office hours for staff to ask any questions concerning the policies and procedures associated with COVID 19.

- Staff was provided with the following professional learning modules: Coronavirus Awareness (All Staff), Personal Protective Equipment (Classified Staff)

3. The LEA will 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, which may include student health and foodservices.

Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services in case isolation, quarantine, or future school closures are required, including how the LEA will meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners.

Washington Unified transitioned when required and can transition again if necessary to a comprehensive distance learning program that included three learning options for students: 1) An online educational program option, 2) a paper/pencil educational program option, and 3) an educational television program option. Families were contacted by their teachers or other school staff and able to choose the learning option that worked best for them. WUSD teachers provided daily lessons in CORE content areas both digitally and in a paper packet format. Special populations, including English Learners and Students with Disabilities, were provided with additional materials and supports, including online individualized instruction, to be able to access learning. WUSD adopted a "no harm" grading policy during school closure. The completion of lessons and activities was strongly encouraged, but not required in order to maintain compliance with guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE). Middle School and High School students were given the option to improve their grades by completing lessons and activities assigned by their teachers. WUSD believes the system that was established for school closure was the best educational platform given the circumstances. If future school closures are required, WUSD would act accordingly.

Social-Emotional Support Program

In addition to teacher contacts, WUSD counselors, our school social worker, and our contracted school psychologists and counseling service provider (All 4 Youth) continued to provide critical social-emotional supports during school closure utilizing phone calls and online meeting platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom.

Meal Distribution

WUSD nutrition staff prepared and distributed breakfasts and lunches daily throughout school closure, including providing meals for families during our regularly scheduled Spring Break. During school closure, 100,744 meals were distributed on a grab-and-go basis to all children under 18, regardless of whether or not they attended WUSD schools.

Technology Distribution

In order to facilitate the online learning options outlined above, WUSD provided Chromebook access to all families. WUSD is now prepared to be a 1:1 device to student ration. Furthermore, WUSD provided families with hotspots to help connect to the internet for online learning. WUSD would provide these services in the future if needed.

Communication

WUSD created a "School Closure Information and Resources" section on each school's website which included a page dedicated to regular COVID-19 updates. The auto-dialer system was used regularly and all information pertaining to school closure was classified as "emergency" communications so that all parents and guardians would receive updates. Letters were also mailed from both the district office and the school sites pertaining to educational learning options, meal distribution, community resources, grading policies, etc. WUSD sought stakeholder input about school closure from parents, students (Grades 3-12), and staff using Google Surveys in order to gain important information about how to plan for the upcoming school year.

WUSD provided supports for Students with Disabilities including creating Emergency Distance Learning Plans that included modified lessons and individualized support from RSP and SDC teachers.

Designated ELD

English learners were provided with designated learning materials, including grade level ELD Choice Boards, and access to supplemental digital learning programs, such as Ticket to Read and Reading Plus. Designated staff members at each site contacted each English Learner by phone to make sure families were aware of the

additional supports and could access them. Staff also provided on-going support as requested by students, including online tutoring sessions or phone calls. WUSD designed a technology-based summer school option specifically for at-risk groups, including English Learners which would provide remote small group instruction in Math and ELA using Google Meets to prevent learning gaps and strengthen English proficiency.

4. The LEA sought public comments in the development of its plan and took those comments into account in the development of its plan.

Describe the LEA's policy or practice that provided the public with an opportunity to provide comments and feedback and the collection process. Describe how any feedback was incorporated into the development of the plan.

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In addition, the LEA provides the following assurances:

- The LEA has made (in the case of statutorily compliant plans) or will make (in the case of new plans) its plan publicly available no later than 30 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation.

- o Please insert link to the plan:

- http://www.washingtonunified.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021_Safe_Return_to_In-Person_Instruction_and_Continuity_Plan_Washington_Unified_School_District_20210629.pdf

- The LEA sought public comment in the development of its plan and took those public comments into account in the development of its plan.

- The LEA will periodically review and, as appropriate revise its plan, at least every six months.

- The LEA will seek public comment in determining whether to revise its plan and, if it determines revisions are necessary, on the revisions it makes to the plan.

- If the LEA revises its plan, it will ensure its revised plan addresses each of the aspects of safety currently recommended by the Centers for Disease Control(CDC), or if the CDC has revised its guidance, the updated safety recommendations at the time the LEA is revising its plan.

- The LEA has created its plan in an understandable and uniform format.

- The LEA's plan is, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parent can understand, or if not practicable, orally translated.

- The LEA will, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provide the plan in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

The following person or persons is/are the appropriate contact person for any questions or concerns about the aforementioned plan.

Please list name(s), title(s), address, county, and contact information for the person or persons responsible for developing, submitting, and amending the LEA plan.

John L. Sherron , Director of Curriculum & Instruction, 7950 S Elm, Fresno, CA 93706, (559) 495-5621