

## Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

### Addendum Guidance

LEAs are required to update the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan every six months through **Sept. 30, 2023**. Each time, LEAs must seek public input on the plan and any revisions and must take such input into account. The purpose of the plan is to keep stakeholders informed.

Every LEA should complete the addendum and upload in the LEA document library and post to the LEA's website (February 1 and August 27). Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

Please consider the following when completing the addendum:

- Ensure the LEA used multiple models of engagement offered to stakeholders. Examples may include surveys, in-person or virtual committee meetings, town hall meetings, or other inclusive engagement opportunities.
- LEAs should engage all applicable groups noted in meaningful consultation during the crafting of the plan.
- The number of stakeholders engaged should represent the composition of students. For example, if students with disabilities make up 15 percent of students, then 10-20 percent of respondents should represent this subgroup.
- Ensure the stakeholder engagement happened prior to the development/revision of the plan.
- The LEA must engage the health department in the development of the plan. This is not the same as providing the health department with COVID-19 numbers.
- Plans must explicitly address every bullet point in Question 3 regarding district policies and strategies.
- Plans require local board approval and public posting.
- LEAs must update the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* at least every six months through Sept. 30, 2023, seek public input on the plan and any revisions and take such input into account. All revisions must include an explanation and rationale of why the revisions were made.
- All revisions must include an explanation and rationale, with meaningful public consultation, and in an understandable format. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated. The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Addendum

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief 3.0 (ESSER 3.0) Fund under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. Funding provided to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students.

In the fall of 2021, LEAs developed and made publicly available a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. All plans were developed with meaningful public consultation with stakeholder groups. LEAs are required to update the plan every six months through September 30, 2023 and must seek public input on the plan and any revisions and must take such input into account. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools and to ensure the plan is current. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

The following information is intended to update stakeholders and address the requirement.

LEA Name: Stewart County Schools

Date: September 2023

### **1. Describe how the LEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in development of the revised plan.**

The LEA developed a presentation that provided an overview of available ESSER funds and general guidelines on how the LEA planned to allocate ESSER funds. The presentation was published on social media, the system website, and hard copies were available at each school during registrations, open houses, etc. A feedback form accompanied the presentation. This form allowed stakeholders to have input in how ESSER funds were allocated and make further recommendations on how funds could be used. The form provided each stakeholder an opportunity to represent various student subgroups. Additionally, work sessions were held with school & district administrators, teachers, and school leaders to further adjust the plan and meet the needs of our students. Teacher and building-level administrator feedback was extremely valuable in the development of the plan. Additionally, the school reopening committee that was formed in May 2020 resumed meeting in the summer of 21' and will continue to review data. The committee is composed school leaders, a parent, a teacher, and several health officials including the Stewart County Community Medical Center's Public Health County Director. The Department of Health worked collaboratively with the LEA providing guidance on mitigation strategies, real-time data concerning community spread, and how the two departments could cooperatively work in keeping schools safe for students and staff.

### **2. Describe how the LEA engaged the health department in the development of the revised plan.**

The LEA and the local health department have maintained a close communication with each other to provide information and share resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control measures and to establish procedures for the notification and response to COVID-19 illness in school settings. The LEA's School Board approved the LEA to work closely with the local health department as they make decisions regarding which mitigation strategies to implement and when based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Guidelines. The live link to the guidelines are regularly checked and followed:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/Isolation-QuarantineRelease.pdf>

The LEA has posted this live link to the Facebook and Stewart County Schools webpage for the community to be able to access the most up to date information and guidelines.

**3. Provide to the extent to which the LEA has updated adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the following health and safety strategies.**

<i>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies</i>
Even though the Stewart County School System does not have a mask mandate, a student’s documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, will always be considered.
<i>Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)</i>
Social distancing will occur indoors with a minimum 3 feet target where possible. Where feasible, we maintain cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunch times, and while participating in extracurricular activities.
<i>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette</i>
Students have a hand washing routine and buildings have hand sanitizing stations throughout all buildings. Employees model and encourage covering your cough and sneeze and disposing of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle or into your elbow when tissue is unavailable. Signs are posted.
<i>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation</i>
Additional sanitization of high-touch areas will be ongoing. Efforts have taken place over the last year to improve the air quality within schools by increasing outdoor air ventilation and changing filters in all buildings more frequently. Individuals engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity during a physical education class will be in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of three to six feet from all other individuals.
<i>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine</i>
Contact tracing will be a collaborative effort between the local health department and LEA. School health officials will work to gather information identifying students who came in contact with a positive case. School health officials will then work with the local health department to provide the names of any close contacts and a directory of information.
<i>Diagnostic and screening testing</i>
Self-screening, handwashing, covering sneezes, and staying home when sick for all students, employees, and visitors are encouraged. If an employee is diagnosed or exposed to a positive case of Covid, the local board passed a policy granting employees 10 days of COVID sick leave. Extra precautions from nursing staff will be implemented for students or staff exhibiting symptoms characteristics of Covid-19. Visitors will be limited and self-symptom screening will occur prior to building entry.
<i>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</i>
The LEA has collaborated with the local health department to administer vaccines to staff members who voluntarily wanted the vaccine. The Health Department continues to provide vaccines daily from 12:30-3:30 which allows time for employees and students to take advantage of walk in appointments.
<i>Universal and correct wearing of masks</i>
Face coverings for all students and staff are encouraged but not required. Posters from the Department of Health showing the proper way to wear a face covering are posted in multiple places in each school building.

**4. Provide a current description as to how the LEA is ensuring continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.**

As a result of our technology plan, the Stewart County School System (SCSS) is a one-to-one device school district. Students have Chromebooks and each teacher has been equipped with a Chromebook which will allow education to continue to be delivered (remotely). In addition, the SCSS has purchased promethium boards for each instruction room. The after school tutoring and summer school will assist in academic needs. Intervention Assistants have been hired to assist with student learning. The SCSS will continue to support students with social emotional, and mental health needs through a variety of means that will include, but may not be limited to: SAP (Student Assistance Program), School Counselors, Mental Health Case Workers, and a Mental Health Cooperative Therapist. A School Family Liaison is also being hired. Coordinated School Health staff includes a counselor and a nurse as well as a Family Resource Director that is available to support students and staff members. A SWOT analysis meeting with all the mental health providers will be held to create the job description of the School Family Liaison. At the beginning of the pandemic, the SCSS was able to establish remote meal sites for student breakfast and lunch distribution. Those sites (or others) will be used again, should the need arise.