

## 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) helps 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 Sept. 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 and ensure they align with any significant changes to CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. 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: Knox County Schools

Date: August 9, 2023

### 1. Describe how the LEA has continued to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of the revised plan.

Knox County Schools is not making any revisions to the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction plan, but we have continued to engage stakeholders via the district ESSER page on our Knox County Schools website, as well as community meetings with the following organizations; Centro Hispano, Justice Knox, Knox Ed Foundation, Knox Dyslexia Advisory, KCS School Board, KCS teachers, DCS, CAC, United Way, Foster Care, NAACP, Urban League, KCS Families, Middle School Counselor Advisory Team, TN Student Assistance Program, and Boys and Girls Club. During the meetings, feedback was collected on chart paper and the disaggregated to review trends and patterns.

Knox County Schools has the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction plan posted on their district website ESSER page, with a survey link for ongoing feedback.

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

Knox County Schools will continue to collaborate with Knox County Health Department through standing quarterly meetings. Knox County Schools and Knox County Health Department can meet more frequently if there is a reason to do so.

Per our original plan, staff and families who have specific questions will be directed to their primary care provider. Individuals who do not have access to a primary care provider will be directed to Knox County Health Department, Individuals who wish to access general information about the level of disease in our community will be directed to the Knox County Health Department website.

**Meeting Dates: September 4<sup>th</sup>, December 4<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**3. Provide 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>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: Families whose students require special accommodations can request a 504 or IEP meeting to discuss the individual needs of the students and what accommodations are needed for their student to access their education.
<i>Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)</i>
KCS has updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: KCS does not have any COVID physical distancing expectations.
<i>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette</i>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Staff will reinforce good handwashing habits through modeling and verbal reminders.
<i>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation</i>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: Knox County Schools maintains clean and healthy facilities through a combination of regular custodial support and both preventative and reactive maintenance programs. Our custodial support includes regular surface disinfecting with a high quality COVID effective agent, and our maintenance teams ensure that work orders for HVAC and environmental related issues are prioritized.
<i>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine</i>
KCS does not have a policy on contact tracing.
<i>Diagnostic and screening testing</i>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: Knox County Schools does not order COVID-19 testing; however, the district does encourage families to reach out to their primary care physician or the Knox County Health Department for testing.
<i>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</i>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: The vaccine is widely available in our community.
<i>Universal and correct wearing of masks</i>
KCS has not updated this policy since the approved Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, and will continue to do the following: Knox County Schools has no policy , but school and community members can mask if they chose to do so.



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

Knox County Schools has made no revisions to this. Knox County Schools has returned to in-person instruction, but teachers are expected to maintain their content on their LMS, Canvas. CASE 21 is a tool that schools will use to monitor students' mastery of foundational skills in reading and numeracy, and new curriculum assessments will provide ongoing assessment throughout the course of study.

Additionally, the district has a battery of diagnostic assessments for reading and numeracy to use to further understand student learning difficulty to be able to prescribe the right interventions if necessary. Through ESSER 3 funding and supported Title II-A professional development funding, tutors will be deployed to support students in the 25<sup>th</sup> – 41<sup>st</sup> percentiles as identified on TCAP assessments, and the Case21 and curriculum based assessments will provide the information for the tutors to identify the students' needs.

Using ESSER 2 funding, the district has purchased High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for reading and English K-12 and has made a shift in middle grades math to HQIM in response to Algebra I data. The expectation for all KCS teachers for the 2021-2022 school year is to post daily make-up work for all students in Canvas. Student who miss school for any reason can access their assignments and submit work on a daily basis.

KCS will continue to provide tiers of support services for students to meet their social emotional and mental health needs. Schools continue to implement the 1-2-3 connect program in which each student is matched with a caring adult, a needs assessment if conducted by counselors and social workers to help with programming for students, and staff are provided additional supports and resources to work with students. During the summer of 2021, over 1,700 classroom staff were provided a variety of professional development experiences that helped prepare them for student reentry into in-person learning.

Additional behavioral health support for students attending the virtual school is provided through the department of school culture. Every new teacher to KCS has been trained in trauma informed practices and social/personal competencies prior to entering their classroom. KCS also implements a comprehensive counseling program which is designed to meet the identified needs of the students. Designated clinical staff work to provide consultation to the school counselors as they support students who experience increased anxiety and stress returning to school. As part of the ESSER 3 application, KCS has proposed funding to allow mental health contracted services continue to all middle and high schools. The Coordinated School Health program will continue to facilitate Healthy School Teams in each of our schools to provide assessment and data to drive school initiatives to support the healthy choices of students.

To address ongoing concerns for student nutrition, KCS will continue to provide breakfast and lunch meal service at no cost of in-person students through the continuation of the Seamless Summer Program. Due to continued flexibility from USDA, we are also offering a pickup option for those students choosing virtual learning at one of our KCS virtual schools.

Knox County Schools values the mental and physical health of our staff. Our employees who are enrolled in health insurance through KCS have access to an employee assistance program (EAP) which allows for up to 5 free counseling sessions. Benefits eligible dependents are also eligible even if not enrolled in medical insurance. On demand mobile app is available to employees enrolled in health insurance through KCS that helps with stress, anxiety, and depression.

Finally, our Office of School Culture has been able to provide acute emotional assistance or resources to employees.


**KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

This Document is approved by the Knox County Board of Education on the 7th day of September, 2023, as reflected in its minutes, and certified by its Chairperson.

  
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Kristi Kristy, Chair

Date: 9/7/2023

Approved by  
Knox County Board of Education

9/7/2023 

**KNOX COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

  
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Glenn Jacobs, Mayor

Date: 9/15/23

**KNOX COUNTY LAW DEPARTMENT**

CONTRACT #: 23-538

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM

  
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Gary Dupler, Deputy Law Director

Date: 8/29/2023