



Danville City Schools

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www.danvillepublicschools.org

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

This plan has been developed to comply with Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education's Interim Final Rule requiring each LEA that receives ARP ESSER III funds to submit a plan that describes how it will safely return to in-person instruction and ensure continuity of services, including LEAs that have already returned to in-person instruction.

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 Danville 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 Danville Public Schools at 434.799.6400.

Questions regarding academic components should be directed to Sharon Barksdale, Director of Finance, at the following email address: sbarksdale@mail.dps.k12.va.us (stipends) or Takiwi Babalola, Chief Academic Officer, at the following email address: tbabalola@mail.dps.k12.va.us (learning loss and academics).

Questions regarding the health and safety components should be directed to Ms. Renita Townes, Coordinator of School Health and Wellness, at the following email address: rtownes@mail.dps.k12.va.us or Mr. William Chaney, Director of School Safety and Security, at the following email address: wchaney@mail.dps.k12.va.us.

Questions regarding social, emotional, and mental health needs under Section 5 of the plan should be directed to Dr. Marva Tutt, Director of Student Support Services, at the following email address: mtutt@mail.dps.k12.va.us.

The LEA has included a summary of its response to COVID-19 in links embedded within this document under Section 2 and Section 3.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Danville 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.

Danville 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 five days per week for the 2021-2022 school year. New guidance from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) allows school divisions to make locally-informed decisions on masking and other mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools. During the July 15 and August 5, 2021 meetings, the Danville School Board approved a recommendation brought forth by Director of Safety and Security William Chaney on mitigation strategies for the 2021-2022 school year.

The approved protocols included the following:

- All staff, students and visitors will wear masks.
- Students will maintain a 3 to 6 feet physical distance.
- Desk/face shields will be used.
- Cafeteria shields will be installed.
- Frequent hand sanitizing.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
- The COVID-19 daily dashboard on our website will be reset with the new school year.
- Contact tracing will be conducted immediately upon notification of a positive case.
- Hygenica machines will be used to sanitize the schools.

All staff are required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are required on all buses, and buses will be full capacity.

For athletics, all spectators will be required to wear masks at indoor sporting events, and capacity will be limited at 70 percent to allow for extra space. Coaches and athletes are not required to wear masks during competition, but those not actively participating should have a minimum of three feet physical distance. DPS recommends that unvaccinated spectators at outdoor sporting events wear masks, but mask usage will not be mandated outside.

All athletes and coaches will wear masks while traveling on buses. Any COVID related issues among athletes will be addressed immediately. By order of the Virginia High School League, visiting teams are to obey COVID protocols of the hosting team.

Decisions on the mitigation strategy for the upcoming school year were informed by information provided by the local health department, evaluating levels of community disease transmission, and school-level vaccine coverage for students and adults. In addition, the CDC now recommends students, staff, and visitors wear masks in schools, regardless of vaccination status. DPS encourages eligible students and staff to be vaccinated, as vaccines are a critical prevention strategy. The division will continue to work with the Virginia Department of Health and monitor updates related to local COVID-19 data. Guidance can be accessed at :

- <https://www.danvillepublicschools.org/covidinfo>,
- [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C4XPHX64B85A/\\$file/Covid%207-15-21.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C4XPHX64B85A/$file/Covid%207-15-21.pdf),
- [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C5LS527097AF/\\$file/COVID%208-5-21%20\(1\).pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C5LS527097AF/$file/COVID%208-5-21%20(1).pdf), and
- [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C62M9Z590C80/\\$file/Copy%20of%20COVID%2019%20Update.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C62M9Z590C80/$file/Copy%20of%20COVID%2019%20Update.pdf).

Additional guidance for the 2021-2022 school year will continue to be followed as updates from the CDC, VDH, and VDOE are provided. An overview of efforts following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have also been outlined below:

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

The State Health Commissioner issued a Public Health Order requiring masks to be worn by all individuals age 5 and older in indoor instructional settings in Virginia schools until July 25th. On August 12, the State Health Commissioner issued a Public Health Order requiring all students, teachers, staff, and visitors age 2 and older to wear a mask indoors in private and public PreK-12 school settings, regardless of vaccination status. This is consistent with [the latest recommendations from the CDC](#) for mask use by students and staff in school settings regardless of vaccination status; and the rapidly growing number of COVID cases in Virginia, largely attributed to the highly contagious Delta variant.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing

Every effort will be made to maintain appropriate distance between students, teachers, staff, and visitors. Students will maintain a 3 to 6 feet physical distance. Desk/face shields will be used. Cafeteria shields will be installed.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Schools will continue to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer will be used. Staff and students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces within the school and on school buses will be conducted to ensure cleanliness of all areas. Danville Public Schools will ensure that ventilation systems operate properly, increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, and that ventilation is adequate when using cleaning and disinfection products to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes. Cleaning and disinfecting products will be safely used and stored. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized regularly. Hygienic machines will be used to sanitize the schools.

Contact Tracing, Isolation and Quarantine

School nurses will continue to provide guidance to schools regarding isolation and quarantine guidelines. Danville Public Schools continues to work directly with the local health department to adjust guidelines and practices to ensure alignment with most recent guidance.

Community-specific data, as reported by the Virginia Department of Health, will continue to be monitored and reviewed daily by the division. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school(s), the school division will work closely with the local health department to determine a course of action and appropriate notification.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

During the 2021-2022, employees exposed or testing positive for COVID will have their care directed by their healthcare professional or the health department. Each employee is required to have a note to return to work. Each employee will need to provide documentation of positive results. Students will need a healthcare professional or the health department note to return after exposure or a positive diagnosis. Parents will need to provide documentation of test results. Tracing will be done by the school nurses. Once notified of positive cases, they will contact all within the school system who may have been exposed. They will make their results known to me and their principals. Appropriate letters will be sent out from the schools. Once the positive is identified and tracing is started, that information is sent to Renita Townes, Coordinator of School Health and Wellness, who will then forward the positive information to the health department. The COVID-19 daily dashboard on DPS' website will be updated regularly.

In summary, Danville Public Schools has utilized CARES ESSER I, II, and III funds for prevention and mitigation strategies. More specifically funds have been allocated to include but not limited to the following: the purchase of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), signage, sanitization equipment and supplies, stipends for nurses (early return and coordination of vaccinations and testing), GPS tracking systems for buses to support contact tracing, substitutes to cover teachers for vaccination appointments, feeding kiosks, E-hall passes, and controlled access points. In addition, the following positions will be funded: Security Officers at elementary and middle schools to ensure the adherence of CDC guidelines; additional Instructional Paraprofessionals to assist with contact tracing.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

Danville Public Schools continues to promote and notify families of community vaccination clinics. The Virginia Department of Health's Pittsylvania/Danville Health District and Averett University, with the support of local COVID-19 response partners, held a COVID-19 vaccination clinic on Saturday, August 21 at Averett University Student Center. This clinic focused on the K-12 vaccination needs, but was open to all.

Most recently, Danville Public Schools and Piedmont Access to Health Services (PATHS) coordinated efforts to provide more opportunities for families to get vaccinated. A COVID-19 vaccine clinic for anyone ages 12 and up will be located at the George Washington High School auditorium., by appointment only, on Saturday, Oct. 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. COVID vaccines and mandated vaccines will also continue to be offered to students via the PATHS Mobile Health Clinic at multiple locations throughout the community.

Danville's School Board unanimously voted to require all students taking part in extracurricular activities to either take a COVID-19 test twice a week or become vaccinated. This requirement

will become effective October 1. The COVID-19 tests will be provided at no cost through Unity Mobile Health. Information regarding local vaccination clinics can also be accessed by families on the division's website at [Danville Public Schools: Vaccinations](#).

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities (with respect to health and safety policies)

The previously established exemptions to the mask mandate continue under the new Public Health Order. This follows the expiration of Executive Order 79, requiring students age 5 and older to wear masks when indoors in K-12 instructional settings, which expired at 11:59pm on Wednesday, June 30, at the end of the declared state of emergency.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Danville 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 division's readiness plan to ensure the continuity of services was shared at the following School Board meetings on [July 15, 2021](#) and [August 5, 2021](#).

Academic:

During the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year, Danville Public Schools will offer face-to-face and virtual options. Face-to-face will consist of a five-days traditional instruction. In addition, Danville Public Schools will operate the I.W.Taylor Virtual Academy for students who opt for a virtual setting. The option of having a virtual academy will allow for schools to better accommodate classrooms for face-to-face instruction while adhering to CDC guidelines. Both models of instruction will adhere to the Virginia Department of Education's SOQ (Standards of Quality) guidelines while also addressing required instructional hours. For those students who opt for virtual instruction. As required under the guidelines of the ARP ESSER III grant, 20% of the funds will be utilized to address lost instruction through the implementation of evidence-based interventions outlined below. As a result of the tremendous impact of coronavirus, these funds will also help address the unique needs of economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, migratory students, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. In addition, principals and other school leaders will be provided the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools; and all staff will be provided the appropriate training and professional development to support students with their academic and social emotional needs.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in summer learning or enrichment during an extended summer school program. Students will have the opportunity to participate in before school, in school, and afterschool, small group remediation/intervention tutoring sessions. Teachers will use assessment data to determine which students are in need of Tier II and Tier III instructional support. Classroom teachers will provide the remediation/intervention services. During the summer of 2021, various summer learning opportunities were offered to PreK-12 students to address learning loss and to also offer opportunities for enrichment.

- Summer Jumpstart: Rising K-8 Grade Students, Content Preview and Remediation
- Transition Academy: Rising Ninth Grade Students, Content Preview and CTE
- High School Summer School and Project Graduation: Grades 9-12, Credit Recovery
- Coding Camp : Grades 3-5, Coding and STEM
- Camp Invention , Grades K-5, STEM
- Virtual Virginia Enrichment, Grades 3-5, Summer Enrichment in Mathematics, Reading, Language Arts, and STEM

Using ESSER II (Learning Loss) and ESSER III funds, Danville Public Schools will address identified learning loss in the areas of targeted remediation, extension, and enrichment as well as extended learning time. Remediation and recovery efforts will be tailored to the unique academic needs of each learner based on current assessments and provided via a variety of engaging summer programs. Summer learning opportunities will be prioritized based on multiple factors including student need and achievement data using equity as a decision point when determining summer learning focus areas. Tiered systems of support will be adjusted to meet increased student needs for summer programs that offer extension and remediation activities that support student academic achievement. Curriculum will focus on student mastery of priority standards and address learning gaps, while remaining grounded in research based instructional practices that support deeper learning. Programs will provide opportunities for advancement and access to rigorous learning experiences for all students based on individual needs. In addition, the supplemental programs will allow opportunities to address social emotional needs and to enhance communication skills in a post-COVID environment. It will be critical for DPS to ensure that students continue to develop critical social-emotional skills in a socially distanced world. As a result, DPS' extended learning opportunities will allow administrators and teachers to not just rethink existing approaches to social learning but to also teach children to navigate the new social skills that are needed for life in a post-COVID setting.

Program descriptions include but are not limited to: 1. Fine Arts Program/Creative Arts Program (Aesthete Academy). The program would begin with a two week summer camp to create foundational skills and expose students to the various arts. The program would carry over into the school year twice per week after school to provide enrichment activities that enable students to grow academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally in a post-COVID setting. The focus will include visual arts, photography, dance, theatre, choral music, and instrumental music while incorporating a standards-based curriculum that focuses on student mastery of priority standards. The program's curriculum will address learning gaps, while remaining grounded in research based instructional practices and access to rigorous learning experiences for all students based on individual needs. 2. Camp Kaleidoscope will provide summer enrichment activities to students with cognitive disabilities. Activities will promote academic, social, and emotional growth focused on the whole child in a post-COVID environment. 3. Project Based Learning (PBL) Camp for Academically Gifted Students for Reinforcement and Recovery of Research and Data analysis skills. Two week summer camp for identified AG students in grades 3-8. 4. K-5 Dual Language/Immersion (DL/I) Summer camp (English/Spanish) whose purpose is to promote language acquisition for multilingual learners (English/Spanish) while promoting intercultural competence in today's diverse educational settings. Research indicates that

students from DL/I programs perform higher than their monolingual peers in reading, writing, math and science.

Various summer learning opportunities will be prioritized based on multiple factors including student need and achievement data using equity as a decision point when determining summer learning focus areas. By addressing learning loss above and beyond the traditional school and summer school setting, Danville Public Schools will be able to attract more targeted populations of students. Thus, providing multiple opportunities to close achievement gaps. The timeline is as follows: June 2021-June 2022 will include planning for implementation (Committees for each program will meet to assess needs, identify students, identify/develop the appropriate curriculum, and to plan logistics for each respective summer program). Funds will pay for stipends for committee members as well as any contracted services for planning. June 2022-July 2022 will include full implementation of summer programs and program evaluation. This implementation cycle will be mirrored during the 2022-2023 school year as well.

The school division will continue to utilize a multi-faceted approach to address learning loss among students. Teachers will continue administering high quality assessments that are valid and reliable to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist in meeting students' needs by differentiating instruction. Teachers will use evidence-based instructional strategies and activities to meet the comprehensive needs of all students and keep them actively engaged in learning. Administrators and teachers will provide information and assistance to parents and families regarding how they can effectively support students, including a distance learning environment where applicable. School staff will also track student attendance to ensure continuity of learning. Additionally, school staff will coordinate with community agencies to offer and provide targeted support to families as needed.

The school division will continue to have a coordinated plan in place to address continuity of instruction should any school closures become necessary in the upcoming school year. This plan will include providing meals to eligible students, coordinating technology for online learning, following guidance on IDEA requirements, and ensuring the continuance of other educational services. Learning modules via Google Classroom are embedded in the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). CANVAS also includes Danville's curriculum, pacing guides, textbook resources, and instructional resources.

Social-Emotional and Mental Health:

In addition to prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff as school buildings reopen, the social emotional well-being of students, their families and school division staff are a top priority for Danville Public Schools. ESSER II funds were specifically allocated to fund five Social Workers to address such needs. During the 2021-2022 school year, two Behavior Specialists positions were funded to support and assess instructional and behavioral programs for students in a therapeutic and behaviorally supported educational environment and ESSER II funds were allocated to fund 5 Social Workers, or Pupil Support Specialists. ESSER III funds will be used to purchase contracted services to include four-day contracted workshops on "Responsive Classrooms" for all elementary and middle schools. "Responsive Classroom" is an

evidence-based approach that focuses on social-emotional learning while addressing academics, positive community, effective classroom management, and developing mental awareness.

Student Health:

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- [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C5LS527097AF/\\$file/COVID%208-5-21%20\(1\).pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C5LS527097AF/$file/COVID%208-5-21%20(1).pdf), and
- [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C62M9Z590C80/\\$file/Copy%20of%20COVID%2019%20Update.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/dps/Board.nsf/files/C62M9Z590C80/$file/Copy%20of%20COVID%2019%20Update.pdf).

Food Services:

Danville Public Schools' Child Nutrition Department will continue to work to support schools and families by serving meals in a manner that will enable students to comply with social distancing guidelines and other safety precautions. Cafeteria shields have been installed in school cafeterias. Using ESSER III funds, additional kiosks will be installed at three schools.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Danville Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below. The link to a brief [survey](#) below will be used for public input.

Danville's public comment process is described in the survey's overview introductory paragraph.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

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

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted at <https://www.danvillepublicschools.org/covidinfo>;
- The plan is available in Spanish;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Mrs. Anna Fulton, Coordinator of LIEP Instruction, at 434.799.6400 to request translation; 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 Mr. Marcus Chaney, Director of Instructional Technology and/or Dr. Tia Hairston, Director of Services for Exceptional Children at 434.799.6400.