

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

Updated: 11/2/2021

To achieve continued success with a return to in-person instruction, school districts must continue practices of transparency with stakeholders around: (1) mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and (2) strategies to ensure students have access to needed services for academic success. As outlined in the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) and accompanying interim final rules, these strategies must be publicly re-evaluated at a minimum of every six months through September 2023.

Checklist for Required Elements (per the U.S. Department of Education's ARP ESSER Interim Final Requirements, accessible [here](#))

1) Does your district's Safe Return plan include the following?

- Date of school board plan approval and/or review
- Contact person for questions

2) Is it accessible to parents who speak a language other than English and individuals with disabilities?

3) Is it easily accessible on your district's website?

4) Within the plan itself, in easily identifiable places:

- a) Have you clearly outlined how the district will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff; and the extent to which the district has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) safety recommendations including, at a minimum:
- Universal and correct wearing of masks
 - Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (may include cohorting)
 - Handwashing etiquette
 - Respiratory etiquette
 - Cleaning of facilities
 - Maintaining healthy facilities (may include improvements to ventilation)
 - Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
 - Contact tracing in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
 - Quarantine policy for close contacts, whether identified in the school setting or outside of the school setting, in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
 - Isolation policy for positive COVID-19 cases, in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
 - Diagnostic and screening testing for COVID-19

- Efforts to provide vaccinations for eligible members of the school community
- Coordination with state and local health officials

b) Have you clearly outlined how the district will ensure continuity of services, for in-person, remote, and/or hybrid students as applicable, including at a minimum:

- Services to address students' academic needs, including learning loss
- Students' social, emotional, and mental health needs
- Staff members' social, emotional, and mental health needs
- Food services
- Student health, if not addressed in the above

Revised November 2021:

5) Districts must seek public input on whether to revise Safe Return plans a minimum of every six months. The date of last review and/or approval must be noted on the district's plan. Initial Safe Return plans must be posted no later than Aug. 20, 2021, and reviewed at least once within every six-month period for the life of the ARP ESSER grant.

District Assurance of Regular Review

The South Dakota Department of Education will collect assurances from superintendents that Safe Return plans have been reviewed and submitted for public comment at least once within the last six months. The process of collecting assurances will occur every December and June throughout the life of the ARP ESSER grant.

To facilitate transparency, the department will post the link to each school district's plan on its website. It will be the responsibility of the district to ensure its link remains valid.