RUSSELL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
2021 – 2022
SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION
AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN
(COVID-19 OPERATIONS PLAN)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education is providing an additional $121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund). This legislation will award grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

This plan describes how the LEA or district will provide the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. This report template complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP Act (Public Law 117-2), the ESSER III grant terms, conditions, and assurances (CFDA Number 84.425U), and the interim final rule established by the United States Department of Education, 86 FR 21195.

Furthermore, the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 1 on September 9, 2021 during a Special Session called by Governor Andy Beshear. Senate Bill 1 requires all public school districts in the state of Kentucky to develop a COVID-19 Operations Plan. This plan addresses face mask requirements, quarantine procedures, Test to Stay/Random Testing, non-traditional instruction (NTI) days, and remote learning. The goal of the Kentucky General Assembly and the Russell County School District is to prioritize in-person learning for all students in the safest manner possible during the Pandemic.

1. MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY

COVID-19 community levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by the number of hospital beds being used for COVID-19 patients, hospital admissions for COVID-19, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in a community.

*See APPENDIX A for a summary of CDC COVID-19 Community Level and K-12 Schools recommendations.

A. Masking
CDC recommendations when COVID-19 community levels are classified:

LOW Baseline Prevention Strategies	• Targeted mask use following at-school exposures and during outbreaks
MEDIUM Localized and Targeted Mitigation	• Targeted mask use following at-school exposures and during outbreaks • Consider universal masking for all students and staff
HIGH Most Layered Prevention Strategies	• Universal masking for all students and staff indoors and on busses • All persons 2 years of age and older should wear well-fitting masks or face coverings while indoors in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including buses operated by public and private school systems, unless

- School nurses will wear personal protective equipment (PPE), as per CDC guidelines, for medical clinics.

B. Physical Distancing

CDC recommendations when COVID-19 community levels are classified:

LOW or MEDIUM	Physical distancing is not routinely recommended but should be considered after COVID-19 exposures, during outbreaks, or for high-risk persons.
HIGH	Physical distancing of at least 3 feet is recommended between K-12 students in classrooms. To the greatest extent practicable, schools should reduce the number of students in each classroom, turn desks to face the same direction, utilize assigned seating, and remove nonessential furniture. Maximize physical distancing for unvaccinated persons who are eating meals indoors. Students should not be excluded from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff. Utilize cohorts or pods (a stable group with fixed membership that stays together through activities) as an additional strategy that facilitates more efficient contact tracing and minimizes opportunities for transmission, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing (e.g., young children) or when other layered prevention strategies are discontinued. Limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities with people who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.

- Each student will be assigned a seat in the classroom and on the bus.

C. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Everyone will cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow, covering mouth and nose. The tissue will be thrown away immediately and hands will be sanitized.

D. Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

- Frequently, high-touched surfaces will be routinely cleaned using CDC approved disinfectant.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at every building <mark>entrance and exit</mark>, in every classroom, <mark>throughout the halls, and in other common areas</mark>.
- CDC approved disposable wipes will be available to all staff to clean commonly used surfaces such as keyboards and desks.
- The district will ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices, i.e. "fog" machine.
- <mark>Additional personnel will be acquired to improve facility cleaning to the greatest extent possible.</mark>

E. Improving Ventilation

- Air purifiers have been provided for all locations that had no air exchange with the outdoors.
- The usage of air handlers have been increased to optimize outdoor air exchange.

F. Exposures and Quarantine

CDC recommendations when COVID-19 community levels are classified:

ALL LEVELS	When COVID-19 exposures occur in school settings:
	• Contact tracing following school exposures to COVID-19 is not expected. Where feasible, schools should notify families and staff when a known exposure to COVID-19 occurs in the classroom or in school settings.
	• Everyone who is known to have had close contact to a person with COVID-19 should wear a well-fitting mask when around others for 10 days and is recommended to be tested 5 days or more after the exposure.
	• Quarantine is not routinely recommended following exposures to COVID-19 that occur in school settings. Targeted use of quarantine may be recommended during outbreaks of COVID-19 in the classroom or school.
	• A letter will be sent home to all parents/guardians if their child has had a close contact and parents/guardians have the option to quarantine their child.
	When COVID-19 exposures occur outside of school settings (i.e., households):
	• **Quarantine is not recommended** for the following individuals:
	o Students 5-17 years of age who have completed their 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.
	o Persons 18 years of age and older who are up to date with their recommended COVID-19 vaccinations.
	o Persons who have documented COVID-19 illness in the 3 months prior to their exposure (with a positive COVID-19 PCR or antigen test). Antibody testing should not be used for determining need to quarantine.

	• "Test to Stay" modified quarantine is recommended for individuals who do not meet the above exemption criteria and who are asymptomatic. Individuals may continue to attend in-person school activities if they have received at least one negative COVID-19 test during the 5-day quarantine period and can wear a well-fitting mask in indoor school settings when around others. • Quarantine, or Test to Stay modified quarantine, may be discontinued after day 5 if the individual is symptom free. The last day of exposure to the case is considered day 0. If the individual is continually exposed to COVID-19 (i.e., a household member that they are unable to isolate away from) then the last day of exposure is the last day that the case is considered infectious (day 5-10, determined by the individual's last day of symptoms). • Everyone who is known to have had close contact to a person with COVID-19 should wear a well-fitting mask when around others for 10 days and is recommended to be tested 5 days or more after the exposure.

- ==Russell County Schools, in partnership with the local health department and Healthy Kids Clinic, will utilize the "test to stay" strategy. The parents/guardians of students would give prior permission to testing==.

- The district will maintain logs for each building of contacts, dates of exposure and quarantine dates.

G. Isolation

- **Ensure sick students, teachers, or staff stay home** if they have fever and/or symptoms of COVID-19, including: (i.e. fever, new cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, muscle or body aches, vomiting or diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell) should not report to school.

CDC recommendations when COVID-19 community levels are classified:

ALL LEVELS	**Instruct parents/guardian, teachers, and staff to report positive COVID-19 test results** to the school or school district. **Ensure persons who test positive for COVID-19 self-isolate** away from school for: • **At least 5 full days from the day that their symptoms started if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.** The first day of symptoms is considered day 0. The individual may return to school after 5 days when their symptoms are fully resolved or after 10 days even if they have lingering symptoms. The individual must continue to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days when around others indoors. If the individual is unable to wear a

	mask properly and consistently in indoor school settings, they should self-isolate from school for 10 full days.
	• 5 full days from the date of testing if they have never developed symptoms. The day of testing is considered day 0. The individual must continue to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days when around others indoors. If the individual is unable to wear a mask properly and consistently in indoor school settings, they should self-isolate from school for 10 full days. If the individual develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow the above isolation guidance for someone with symptoms. **Direct sick persons to isolate at home away from school.** Sick students, teachers, or staff who are not tested for COVID-19 may return when their symptoms resolve. Consider implementing a program to offer on-site rapid COVID-19 testing for sick students, teachers, or staff.

Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff

If a student or staff member becomes symptomatic during the school day, they will be**:**

- Safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- Testing will be available on-site through Healthy Kids Clinic.
- The district will request proof of a negative test or a doctor's note clearing the individual to return to school.

H. Vaccination Efforts
- The district will collaborate with Healthy Kids Clinic and disseminate vaccination information to all educators, staff and students.
- Vaccine clinics have been made available for any student or community member above the age of 12 in-county, as well as, neighboring counties.
- With parent consent, vaccines will be available for students on-site

I. Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities
- All plans will continue to be followed for Individual Health Plans, 504 Plans, and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).
- Homebound applications are available for students per a doctor order.

2. ENSURING CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

A. **Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including, but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.**

- For the 2021-2022 school year, Russell County School District will return to a pre-pandemic academic schedule inclusive of all extra-curricular activities.

- The expectation is for all K-12 students to be in-person, five days a week. Russell County School District will address learning loss among students and implement evidence-based interventions to meet the comprehensive needs of students.

- Five full-time, certified Intervention Specialists (one for each school in the district) will be hired to work with students one-on-one and/or in small groups.

- Eleven full-time Instructional Assistants for each First Grade classroom within the district will be hired to mitigate early childhood loss of learning.

- Russell County Schools provide a 1:1 device for each student. If a student is quarantined or unable to attend classes at school, assignments and academic support will be available through an online classroom format.

- Russell County students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 will have the opportunity to participate in virtual learning through enrollment in the Russell County Virtual Learning Academy. Certified educators will serve these virtual students. An interview for acceptance into the Virtual Learning Academy will be contingent upon previous success with virtual learning and other eligibility guidelines as outlined in the application. If a student is not making academic progress in the Virtual Learning Academy, he/she will be required to attend in-person classes.

- The Kentucky General Assembly will provide public school districts up to 10 NTI Days annually. NTI days can only be utilized when the district closes all schools in the district. Prior to the Pandemic, these days were primarily reserved for weather related days. NTI Days can be utilized for COVID-19 related reasons if the district needs to close all schools. A decision about NTI will be communicated clearly to all students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members. Faculty and staff (certified and classified) shall be required to perform work duties on-site during the student attendance day, except for employees quarantined due to COVID-19.

- The Kentucky General Assembly will provide public school districts up to 20 remote learning days to be utilized during the 2021-22 school year. These are days where a district doesn't close all schools in the district. These days can be used when certain

- The district will provide social/emotional support both during and after the school day.

- A School Mental Health Specialist has been hired to provide direct support to students who are potentially at-risk for social/emotional issues.

- Student and staff health services will be available on-site with Healthy Kids Clinic. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been established with other outside agencies to provide other medical services, as needed.

- Full, in-person food services will be available for students. Students will eat breakfast in the classroom and a supervised lunch will occur in the lunchrooms. Seating as cohorts/pods will be recommended as spacing allows.

- The district will follow all mandates of the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Before making its plan publicly available, school districts must seek public comment on the plan and develop the plan after taking into account public comment. The ARP Act requires that school districts make their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online and that the plans be in an understandable and uniform format; to the extent practical, are written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practical, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

- Russell County School District, in accordance with ESSER III guidelines, sought public input on the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services* plan from all district stakeholders. The input was gathered in a combination of methods, including face-to-face meetings with the Russell County Chamber of

Commerce and an Agency for Substance Abuse Policy. A public survey was posted on Russell County School District's website (www.russell.kyschools.us). The availability of the survey was made known by utilizing social media, a district email and phone message, as well as, inviting public participation through visits at the local radio stations. A concerted effort was made to reach out individually to minority populations such as English Learner families due to their language barrier.

NOTE: This plan is fluid. Depending on national, state and regional guidelines, as well as, recommendations from public health experts, this plan may be revised. The plan will be reviewed at a minimum of every six months.

Revised: March 21, 2022

COVID-19 Community Level and K-12 Schools

LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Baseline prevention strategies	Localized and targeted mitigation	Most layered prevention strategies
• Stay up to date with vaccinations • Stay home when sick • 5-day isolation + 5-day masking for individuals with COVID-19 • Targeted mask use following at-school exposures and during outbreaks • Promote on-site testing programs for sick or exposed persons • Test to Stay modified quarantine following community exposures	• Stay up to date with vaccinations • Stay home when sick • 5-day isolation + 5-day masking for individuals with COVID-19 • Targeted mask use following at-school exposures and during outbreaks • Consider universal masking for all students and staff • Promote on-site testing programs for sick or exposed persons • Test to Stay modified quarantine following community exposures • Cohort classrooms and limit mixing between students, where possible	• Stay up to date with vaccinations • Stay home when sick • 5-day isolation + 5-day masking for individuals with COVID-19 • Universal masking for all students and staff indoors and on buses • Promote on-site testing programs for sick or exposed persons • Test to Stay modified quarantine following community exposures • Cohort classrooms, limit mixing between students, where possible • Limit large gatherings and activities • Encourage physical distancing >3ft