

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

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

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.

South Carolina will receive \$2,112,051,487 in ESSER III funds from the Act, with 90 percent being awarded to school districts with amounts determined in proportion to the amount of Title I, Part A funds they received in summer 2020 from funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The remaining funds will be used for state-level activities to address issues caused by COVID-19.

As a requirement for receiving ESSER III funds, Dorchester School District Two is required to create a Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan using a specific report template. This report template complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP Act, the ESSER III grant terms, conditions, and assurances, and the interim final rule established by the U. S. Department of Education.

We expect school guidance documents to be updated periodically. Once that happens, DSD2 will revise the plan as needed with our stakeholder groups, and

then share it for public input. We expect this plan to be modified throughout the school year.



Plan as of October 11, 2021

Maintaining Health and Safety

Overview

A district's plan must include how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies or practices and a description of any such policies or practices, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations including: universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); hand washing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies or practices; and coordination with state and local health officials.

Description of maintaining health and safety

Since the beginning of this pandemic, Dorchester School District Two (DD2) has worked tirelessly to develop and implement safety protocols to protect our students and staff. Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year the DD2 Reopening of Schools Task Force, comprised of six (6) committees (Health and Safety, Teaching and Learning, Communication, Technology, Operations, Social/Emotional Learning) including parents, liaison members, students, teachers,

and administrators, community members who developed and implemented a comprehensive Re-Opening Instructional Models plan based on guidance from DHEC, CDC, medical partners, and the SCDE. This plan which places health and safety as a top priority has undergone frequent review and, as appropriate, revisions based on current health conditions.

Dorchester School District Two transitioned from a hybrid instructional model to a full, five-day a week in-person instructional model for all grade levels in mid-February 2021. As we transition to the 2021-2022 school year, Dorchester School District Two remains committed to remain in this five-day a week instructional model. We will continue to monitor disease spread in our community and in our schools. The district will make appropriate modifications to the plan, if needed, as we are committed to putting the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront of all decisions. We will continue to practice recommended health and safety protocols to include, but not limited to, wearing of face coverings when warranted and at the discretion of parents, practicing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities to include frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high-traffic areas, and maintaining appropriate social distancing to the extent possible.

Protecting our District community and minimizing the potential for a virus outbreak at any District location remains a priority. As a District, we will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves to determine what is best of all students and staff and update our guidance and procedures as needed. This remains a fluid situation and we will be flexible and, as health and medical conditions change, we will adjust accordingly. The success of our continued full-time face-to-face instructional model requires awareness, understanding, and support of parents, teachers, staff, students, and the entire DSD2 community.

Policies or Practices Regarding CDC Recommendations

Wearing of masks

The current recommendation from DHEC, CDC, and other medical partners, continues to be the universal use of face coverings for all people, regardless of vaccination status, when indoors in school settings, especially when physical distancing is not possible. Exceptions continue to be

- Children under 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unable to remove the face covering without assistance

On August 9, 2021, the Dorchester School District Two Board of Trustees amended Policy ADD: Face Coverings to strongly recommend and encourage mask usage by students, staff, and visitors, especially those who are not fully vaccinated, while in school facilities. If six feet social distancing is not possible, a minimum of three feet will be maintained to the extent possible.

On July 6, 2021, the SCDE announced that it would no longer enforce the CDC's January 29, 2021 Order requiring the use of face coverings by people on public transportation conveyances and hubs, which includes school buses. However, on August 27, 2021, the SC Department of

Education reinstated the enforcement of this order. Therefore, beginning Monday, August 30, 2021, Dorchester School District returned to requiring all students and staff utilizing school bus transportation to and/or from school and school-sponsored events to wear a face covering while on the bus. Additionally, the District develop and implemented disciplinary measures to enforce this requirement.

Volunteers and visitors will be required to follow the same procedures as DD2 staff.

All students and staff were issued multiple reusable cloth face coverings at the start of the 2020-2021 school year and were provided instructions on proper use and care. Disposable face coverings have been and will continue to be made available for students and staff in all schools and on buses.

[COVID-19 Updates/Face Masks](#)

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)

Dorchester School District Two transitioned to a full, five-day face-to-face instructional model for all K-12 students in February 2021. It is our intention to continue with this instructional model for the upcoming year as we know students' academic, social, and emotional needs are best met if students are in school. Students/families, grades 6 – 12, still hesitant to return to a F2F instructional model, have been given the opportunity to enroll in the District's Virtual Academy. Additionally, students in grades K-5 have been given the opportunity to enroll in the Virtual Academy sponsored by the Lowcountry Education Consortium. The District is a member of the Consortium and, therefore, monitors the educational activities and progress of our enrolled students.

Although all typical classrooms within our District were outfitted with DHEC-recommended plexiglass during the 2020-2021 school year, it is the intent of the district to remove the plexiglass barriers for the 2021-2022 school year. The district plans to keep a few barriers in each classroom for any student(s) who wish to continue using them. Additional plexiglass partitions will be maintained in classrooms for small group instruction. Teachers may choose to keep plexiglass at their desks as an additional safety measure, especially if a distance of three to six feet cannot be maintained.

It is the district's goal to limit class sizes to the extent possible in an attempt to implement social distancing protocols. Should class sizes exceed projected numbers, larger classes will be relocated to bigger spaces such as multi-purpose and media rooms to allow for more social distancing.

At the elementary level, students are grouped together in classroom cohorts and remain in those groups for fine arts classes and other activities. At the secondary level, maintaining cohorts remain a challenge due to varied schedules, but students are grouped together with teacher rotations and limited transitions whenever possible. Students remain together by grade level in larger schools, so all students are not together during transitions and lunch/ILT.

Seating charts and student rosters are kept for each class, bus, and extra-curricular activity to assist with prompt and accurate contact tracing.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Gloves, hand sanitizer, and other supplies will continue to be provided to District sites on a continual, as needed basis throughout the school year. Hand sanitizer stations will remain in place in all schools and buildings, with emphasis on areas of entrances, exits, and other high traffic areas. In addition, hand sanitizer will continue to be supplied to all classrooms for use by students and staff.

Students and staff will continue to be encouraged to perform routine hand hygiene upon entry to buildings, before meals, before and after use of shared materials, and at other times as needed throughout the day.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Custodial Services cleaning practices will continue to be focused on cleaning for health, which includes an emphasis on disinfecting high-touch surfaces where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be transmitted (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, classroom sink handles, countertops). When COVID19 cases are identified, all classrooms and other spaces utilized by the individual during their infectious period will be cleaned as soon as possible using PPE and products approved for use in COVID-19 situations.

STAT air purifiers have been installed in all classrooms, media centers, cafeterias, multipurpose rooms, and requested administrative and office spaces.

Bi-polar ionization units will continue to be installed in campuses where ventilation is a challenge. These units will perform air exchanges six times per hour and treat the exchanged air.

We will continue to flush air filtration systems in all buildings following ASHRAE guidelines. This will occur two hours prior to building occupation each day to improve ventilation.

Bottle filling stations have been installed throughout the district to replace water fountains and eliminate another point of possible disease transmission.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine

Dorchester School District Two will continue to follow all current guidance from DHEC regarding the treatment of individuals with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Students or staff who become ill in school will be referred to the School Nurse for evaluation.

Any student or staff member found to be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, as outlined by DHEC, will be isolated from other individuals until they can be evaluated further and if

necessary, safely removed from the building. Each school has a dedicated Isolation Room for individuals exhibiting COVID-like symptoms.

Students and staff may not return until they have met criteria for return, as outlined by DHEC.

In the event of a reported case within a school or other District facility, the District Nurse Coordinator will work in conjunction with DHEC to determine action needed and any necessary notifications will be made. Student instruction will continue in a modified, virtual format during any isolation or quarantine period, as tolerated. Contact tracing for all positive cases will occur as soon as possible, including gathering information from students, staff, reviewing seating charts and other pertinent information.

[COVID-19 Updates/Notification Process](#)

Seating charts and student rosters are kept for each class, bus, and extra-curricular activity to assist with prompt and accurate contact tracing.

Diagnostic and screening testing

In partnership with Fetter Healthcare Network, students and staff experiencing symptoms of COVID19 may report to FHCN locations for rapid testing and treatment.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

In partnership with Fetter Healthcare Network, we were able to provide on-site vaccination opportunities for all of our staff members who were interested in receiving it. First dose clinics were held in March and Dose 2 was offered in April. In addition, Dorchester School District Two and Fetter hosted vaccine clinics for students 16 and older with parental consent in mid-May. Second doses will be offered in June. The District will continue to post, advertise, and encourage participation in vaccination clinics offered throughout the community.

To support the importance of vaccinations as another mitigating factor and important step in the return to full face-to-face instruction, the Dorchester School District Two Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution requesting Governor Henry McMaster grant priority vaccination access to all school personnel. [February 2021 Board of Trustees Resolution](#)

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices

Teachers and service providers will continue to provide specially designed instruction and/or related services outlined in a current IEP or 504 accommodations plan. If adjustments need to be made to the instructional model in place for a student, then IEP teams and 504 committees will convene to consider any amendments to special education goals, services, and accommodations to best meet the needs of the student considering any health and safety procedures and the instructional setting.

Upon request, clear masks will be provided to teachers and other staff members.

Students in low incidence classrooms will not be required to wear face coverings. Teachers and assistants in these classrooms encourage proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Instructions on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are delivered in a way that all students can understand.

Coordination with state and local health officials

To provide the safest and healthiest school environment for all students and staff, the school district:

- follows all laws, requirements, and recommendations from DHEC, CDC, State Department of Education, health agencies and partners
- complies with all agencies under whose authority we fall

Options for instructional models and mitigation protocols were developed with flexibility to quickly adapt to the current level of disease activity in our community based on weekly reports and updated guidelines from DHEC.

The SC Department of Education has provided weekly School District Memoranda, which has provided a compilation of updated information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic from state and federal agencies and organizations. Also included are changes in regulations and guidelines from these agencies as it pertains to safe school operations. Resources available for school districts have been an important part of these communiques.

The school district partnered with MUSC Health Back2Business Program to provide guidance and resources to assist the district in identifying best mitigation strategies for a healthy school environment. Medical staff evaluated the health and safety measures practiced in schools and developed a checklist for improved mitigation protocols at each site.

Various medical professionals have presented at multiple Board Meetings to provide community health updates and their impacts on school operations. [Board of Trustees Meetings Recordings](#)

District response on continuity of services

Dorchester School District Two will continue to offer a [Virtual Academy](#) option for students in grades six - 12 through the school District and the [Lowcountry Education Consortium](#) for students in grades K – five. The district is a member of the consortium and, therefore, students remain enrolled students in DD2. School and district administrators monitor the educational activities and progress of our students to ensure success in this alternate learning environment.

[Dorchester School District Two Learning Models](#)

As the District continues to provide instructional support and services to students during the summer and the upcoming school year, the focus will be on meeting the academic and social/emotional needs of students (see instructional support and services information below).

Direct Instructional Models

Elementary Literacy Model includes the following components:

- Explicit Phonics /Word Study
- Grade Level Instruction
- Differentiated/Flexible Instruction
- Fluency
- Explicit Writing

The Elementary Math Model includes the following components:

- Number Talks (K – 2)
- Spiral Review (3 – 5)
- Grade Level Instruction (K – 5)
- Problem Solving (K – 5)
- Differentiated/Flexible Instruction (K – 5)
- Mathematical Fluency (K – 5)

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Dorchester School District Two has developed a K-12 Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to address the needs of all students. The framework provides integrated academic and behavioral supports to children within a three-tiered model designed to address learner needs at the school-wide, targeted and individual levels. This tier model provides a systematic approach for providing student interventions with support throughout the educational process.

Tier 1: Standards-Based Classroom Instruction

Focuses on the general curriculum as well as the instructional and behavioral expectations and supports that are available to all students in the school.

Tier 2: Needs-Based Instruction

Standard Intervention Protocols focus on the provision of supplementary, strategic and skill-specific interventions for students who struggle and demonstrate difficulties meeting the academic and/or behavioral expectations of Tier 1.

Tier 3: Diagnostic Assessment-Prescriptive Instruction

Focuses on the need for more intensive, explicit and sub-skill specific interventions because the student fails to make progress with the Tier 2 interventions.

Families may attend meetings face-to-face or virtually through various technology platforms. Meetings for IEPs, 504 Plans, IGPs, etc. will be scheduled around the needs of the stakeholders.

All students can receive free meals through the district's flexible food plan. The district participates in the Free Meal Program for the Summer and 2021 – 2022 school year as Federal

funding allows. Families are served breakfast and lunch at schools during the school year and Summer Feeding Program sites during the Summer.

During the 2020-21 school year, students participated in beginning of year and end of year assessments using Suite 360 to determine SEL (Social Emotional Learning) needs. Counselors and School Psychologists used this assessment data to develop lessons and interventions to support students throughout the year. Pre and post assessments will be used in 2021-22 to determine the needs by grade level and/or school using the CASEL Framework. The CASEL Framework provides a tiered system of social and emotional support for students and staff.

Tier 1 Supports (Universal Support) - The CASEL Framework includes integration of activities, classroom guidance, school-based initiatives regarding self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. School staff will continue using three signature practices: daily welcoming inclusion activities, student engagement throughout the lesson, and optimistic closure that goes beyond the academic framework.

Tier 2 Supports (Targeted Interventions)– School level SEL teams will meet on a regular basis to review specific data points (attendance, behavior, academics, and teacher referrals) to determine which students should be identified for small-group support. The topics covered during small group support will be determined based upon specific student needs.

Tier 3 Supports (Intensive Support) – We partner with agencies like Coastal Chaplaincy, Dorchester County Department of Mental Health, Dorchester Alcohol and Drug Commission, and NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to create prevention and intervention programs for students, faculty, and staff. The Crisis Response Team revised the flow chart and procedures within the crisis response team manual to implement best practices for students and staff exhibiting signs of trauma and/or self-harm. We utilize a screener and risk assessment to determine the level of severity when students and staff members are exhibiting signs of trauma and/or self-harm. In many situations, students and staff members are referred to counselors for one-on-one meetings, so counselors can determine if students/staff members need to be referred to outside mental health agencies for more intensive treatment and mental health services. h

[Parent and Family Engagement Centers](#)

Dorchester School District Two offers four Parent and Family Engagement Centers (PFEC) conveniently located throughout the District to provide support and services to the District's students, parents, and families. Our centers are a free resource offered to parents and families. The centers offer interactive parent-child story times as well as interactive parent-child rotational engaging activities. The PFEC Facebook page provides several activities such as sensory driven lessons, Minute of Movement activities, fun learning, Weekly Waymaker Newsletter segments, and virtual story time.

Dorchester School District Two will offer a face-to-face Summer Reading and Math Camp (SRMC) for children in Kindergarten – 5th grade. The Elementary SRMC will be held five days a week from June 28, 2021 until July 30, 2021 (24 instructional days). The instructional day will

begin at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. Instruction includes Reading, Mathematics, and STEM. Bus transportation, breakfast, and lunch will be provided for students.

Motivating a Mathematical Mindset (M3) is a face-to-face summer math camp for targeted students at the secondary level. Students will work to reach their math growth targets through small group instruction and collaborative games.

The Middle and High School READ 180 Summer Program is a face-to-face summer camp to help learners strengthen their reading fluency, vocabulary, writing, and academic language. This will be achieved through a blend of whole-group learning using real-world thematic units, independent reading with literature circles, and adaptive literacy software. All current and future READ 180 students are invited to attend this camp.

The ESOL Summer Program is an in-person summer camp for English Language Learners in grades six through twelve. Students will continue developing skills to help prepare them for the coming school year through small-group language practice, reading time, and computer software use. All levels of language learners are welcome to participate. Additionally, secondary students who fail a course can attend in-person course recovery.

Online Summer Opportunities are available for all students to prevent learning loss and expose students to 21st Century learning.

[2021 Summer Enrichment Link](#)

It is the intent of the district to continue all Summer Programs through 2024.

[Dorchester School District Two Road to Recovery Plan](#)

Periodic Review

Overview

Districts are required to review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023, including seeking public input and taking such input into account in determining whether to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

If a district developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that was made publicly available and was developed with public comment, but does not address each of the required aspects of safety established in the ARP Act, the district must, as part of the required periodic review, revise its plan consistent with the ARP Act requirements no later than six months after it last reviewed its plan.

District response on ensuring periodic updates to its plan

Periodic reviews of our plan will include staff and public input solicited through various means to include, but not limited to:

- Board Workshops
- Public Comments at Board Meetings
- Stakeholder Liaison Groups (student, parent, teacher, and support staff)
- Focus Groups
- School Improvement Councils
- Parent Teacher Associations
- District 23 PTA Leadership
- Coalition of Community Group (YMCA, Chamber of Commerce, Dorchester County Emergency Management, Town of Summerville, Community Action, etc...)
- Superintendent's Cabinet
- Principals' and District Administrative Team Meetings

Public Input

Overview

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 practicable, are written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

Before making its plan publicly available, school districts must seek public comment on the plan and develop the plan after considering public comment.

District response on public input in development of its plan

As the District reviews and updates the plan twice a year, at the end of the first semester and the end of the school year, input will be gathered through various communication channels to include, but not limited to, Superintendent's Cabinet meetings, Principals and District Administrative Staff meetings, board meetings, liaison meetings, social media platforms, and parent and community networks.

The Reopening Task Force composed of six committees (Health and Safety, Teaching and Learning, Communication, Technology, Operations, Social/Emotional Learning) and more than 150 individuals (teachers, staff, parents, students, community members) will continue to be involved in the review process. Knowing COVID-19 remains a fluid situation, the plan will be

flexible. As health and medical conditions change, we will adjust accordingly. Any modifications to the plan will be posted to the district's website. The success of our continued full-time face-to-face instructional model requires awareness, understanding, and support of parents, teachers, staff, students, and the entire DD2 community.