

**LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and
Continuity of Services
Giles County Public Schools
151 School Road
Pearisburg, Va. 24134
(540) 921-1421**

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 Giles County 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 Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II (Division Supt.) or Mrs. Lisa Mustain (Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Inst.).

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Giles County Public Schools (GCPS) 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.

Giles County Public Schools created a "Return to Learning Plan" and posted it on our school division website on July 29, 2020. This plan included the following: our instructional model, which we began in a Hybrid format (Group A (M & W) and Group B (T & Th)); a health and safety plan that outlined the expectations for face coverings, school busses, meals, etc. for our students and staff; and it outlined the expectations for individuals who felt they were sick and when they would need to quarantine. It also included a parent compact sheet to ensure parents would not send students to school sick. We worked with a committee and reviewed this information with our local Health Department to ensure we were adhering to the necessary guidelines at the time.

Moving into the 2021-22 school year, GCPS will be operating on a 5 day/week in-person instructional model. This schedule would follow the normal schedule that we operated under prior to the pandemic.

We will continue to review updated information from VDOE, CDC, and VDH as it is received and will continue to be aligned with the CDC and VDH guidelines in place as we move forward.

In addition, Giles County Public Schools has adopted policies on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Universal and correct wearing of masks – GCPS ordered face coverings for students and staff. They were provided to them to use during the 2020-21 SY and were used as a mitigation strategy when 6 ft. of physical distancing wasn't possible.

- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding) – GCPS began the school year on a Hybrid schedule with students staying within their room for instruction. As we transitioned to more students in person, computer labs or gym space were utilized to help create spaces that would allow classes to have at least 3 ft. of physical distancing with universal masking at the time. In addition, schools added lunch shifts to assist with physical distancing, boxes were utilized to pack lunches to make them easier to take back to classrooms, and tables and chairs were purchased to assist with physical distancing.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette – signage was placed within all schools and teachers stressed the importance of washing hands and appropriate respiratory etiquette (i.e. coughing/sneezing into their bent elbow).
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation – GCPS purchased adequate cleaning supplies to clean school facilities, buses, and frequently touched surfaces. GHS received a grant from Giles Carillion Hospital to purchase room air purifiers. In addition, hand sanitizer was purchased and placed within each classroom and on buses. We also installed touchless water fountains throughout the schools prior to reopening. We are looking into renovations to our HVAC systems at some of our facilities to help update and improve air circulation/ventilation within those facilities.
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments – GCPS had designated an isolation area within each of the schools when someone was ill. In addition, GCPS contacted the local health department to work with them in the event contact tracing was necessary and to determine the appropriate quarantine periods for individuals who tested positive or those that were exposed. Teacher Assistants rode the bus to take temperatures of students and monitor mask wearing for those riding the bus. There also were isolation seats on the bus designated for those students who had a temperature.
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities – GCPS worked with Giles Carillion Clinic to offer vaccinations to staff members. In addition, GCPS has worked with, and will continue to work with, our local health department to schedule opportunities for our students to be vaccinated.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies – GCPS followed similar mitigation strategies.
- Coordination with state and local health officials – GCPS is constantly in contact with our local health department representatives to ask questions about updated guidelines and to ensure that we are appropriately following them when notified.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Giles County 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.

GCPS began the school year on a Hybrid Schedule for our students (Group A – Mon./Wed. and Group B – Tues./Thurs.; Friday was a virtual day with buildings being cleaned and teachers having the opportunity to work with virtual students). In November, GCPS transitioned Prek-3 grade students back to 4-days of in-person instruction and in January did the same thing for grades 4-7 and then 8-12. GCPS has developed our SOAR (Summer Opportunity for Academic Recovery) program for the upcoming summer (Monday through Thursday during the time period of June 14, 2021 through July 22, 2021 for grades K – 12) to assist students with the learning

loss that occurred over the past school year due to the pandemic. In addition, STEM activities will be included within this program. GCPS will continue to evaluate the needs of our students and look at future summer programs when the time arises.

Moving into the 2021-22 school year, GCPS will be operating on a 5 day/week in-person instructional model. This schedule would follow the normal schedule that we operated under prior to the pandemic.

We will continue to review updated information from VDOE, CDC, and VDH as it is received and will continue to be aligned to with the CDC and VDH guidelines in place as we move forward.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Giles County Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

GCPS presented a draft copy of this plan to the SB on May 20th. Following that, the draft plan was posted on our website and the public will be asked to provide any feedback on this plan through May 28th. Any feedback that is received will be reviewed and if appropriate, will be incorporated within this plan. This plan will be posted on the Giles County Public Schools webpage by the close of business on June 1, 2021.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Giles County 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 Giles County 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

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

- The plan is posted at – sbo.gilesk12.org
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact GCPS 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 Amanda Tickle or Amy Wheeler at (540) 921-1421.