

# **RUSSELL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S REOPENING PLAN**

Russell County Public Schools – Contact: Dr. Kimberly Hooker, Superintendent – 276-889-6500

## **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**. Russell County Public Schools has been awarded \$8,180,627.66 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Kimberly Hooker, Superintendent.

As we plan for the 2023-2024 school year, we are still facing COVID-19 issues. Russell County Public Schools 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. We have returned to the traditional face-to-face instructional environment. RCPS will open our schools on a regular schedule in the Fall of 2023. This plan will incorporate educational opportunities that include full in-person instruction five days a week from 8:30 am - 3:20 pm. The Region VII Virtual Academy (R7VA) will also be available for K-12 students who meet the RCPS eligibility requirements for attending and to accommodate the ongoing concerns of the pandemic.

## **Section 2: Prevention and Mitigation Strategies**

ARP Act ESSER III funds may be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#) on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning. Russell County Public Schools will use approximately \$100,000.00 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

### **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

Russell County Public Schools will continue to make every effort to provide communication with parents and students. RCPS will continue to use the following methods:

Division and School Website  
Phone  
Email  
Division Facebook Account  
Automated Call System  
School Information Packets

### **MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Provide 5-days per week instruction to the fullest extent possible while still meeting VDH/CDC public health K-12 protocols.
- Coping and Resilience- Schools can play an important role in helping students and staff cope with fear and anxiety caused by the effects of the pandemic.
- Cleaning and Hygiene- Washing hands with soap for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of disease. Schools and staff will continue to promote cleaning protocols to deter the spread of Covid-19.
- Handling Suspected, Presumptive or Confirmed Cases of Covid-19-Taking appropriate steps to address suspected, presumptive or confirmed cases of Covid-19 is critical to containing spread of Covid-19 both in and out of school.
- Communication and Combating Misinformation- Staff, students and families need ongoing, reliable information to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of Covid-19

- Transportation- School buses/vehicles must take similar key steps to protect against the spread of Covid-19 including adhering to consistent cleaning and hygiene protocols.

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**SCHOOLS WILL BE REQUIRED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:**

- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter.
- Educate students, families, teachers, and staff about the signs and symptoms of Covid-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school.
- Establish a dedicated space for symptomatic individuals who become ill during the school day or disclose that they have tested positive for Covid-19.
- Ensure symptomatic students remain under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. The supervising adult should wear a cloth face covering or a procedure mask.
- Require the symptomatic person to wear a cloth face covering or a procedure mask while waiting to leave the facility.
- Utilize VDH/CDC guidance:
- Promote up-to-date Covid-19 vaccinations
- Recommendation of testing if Covid-19 symptoms begin
- Optimize ventilation and maintain improvements to indoor air quality in schools to reduce the risks of germs and contaminants spreading through the air
- Teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risks of spreading viruses, including Covid-19
- Clean surfaces daily to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces
- Support the decision of anyone that chooses to wear a mask
- Quarantine is no longer recommended for exposure to Covid-19
- CDC recommends isolation of five days if test is positive for Covid-19. Return to school wearing a mask

**Section 3: Addressing Unfinished Learning**

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. Russell County Public Schools will use approximately \$1,180,687.37 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

**Academic Needs:**

- All students will be allowed to return to school in-person for the 2023-2024 school year. Students will attend five days a week from 8:30 am to 3:20 pm.
- Plans for the 2023-2024 school year include expanded tutoring, remediation and intervention opportunities and the use of a progress monitoring tool to identify, diagnose and assess learning gaps.
- Additional personnel will be provided to each school for the purpose of individualized learning (Instructional Recovery Specialists).

**Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs:**

- Russell County Public Schools will provide school counselors and teachers professional development to create a plan to address social-emotional needs.
- RCPS will partner with local mental health agencies to provide on-site mental health support and day treatment services.

**Section 4: Other Uses of Funds**

Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act permits school divisions to use the ARP Act ESSER III funding not reserved to address unfinished learning to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a variety of ways. Russell County Public

Schools will use approximately \$4,278,620.29 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

1. Installation of air conditioning in the gymnasium at Honaker Elementary School.
2. Continued renovations to all bathrooms as needed inside each school within the division.
3. Student tuition for Edgenuity Virtual School.

### **Section 5: Addressing Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs**

During the period of the ARP ESSER award, Russell 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 revisions of the plan will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

### **Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment**

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Russell County Public Schools conducted consultation in the following ways:

- With stakeholders, including: students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions – through link on division's website for public comments;
- With Tribes (if applicable); civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students – through link on division's website for public comments; and
- By providing the public the opportunity to provide input on the division's website and taking such input into account.

### **Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public**

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

- The plan is posted at [www.russellcountyschool@russell.k12.va](http://www.russellcountyschool@russell.k12.va).
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Rita Street at [rstreet@russell.k12.va.us](mailto:rstreet@russell.k12.va.us) 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 Dr. Kimberly Hooker at [khooker@russell.k12.va.us](mailto:khooker@russell.k12.va.us).