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

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 Patrick 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 Dean Gilbert, Superintendent of Patrick County Public Schools at 276-694-3163.

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Patrick County Public Schools followed CDC, VDH, and local Health Department guidance. An updated Reopening of Schools Instructional Plan and updated Schools Health Plan can be found on the Patrick County Public Schools home page. The PCPS Infectious Disease (COVID-19) Preparedness and Response Plan is also posted under the following link.

https://patrick.k12.va.us/families/covid_19

Patrick County Public Schools provided instruction in different modalities during the 2020-2021 academic year. The following list details the changes to instructional delivery based on the local health matrix and recommendations from VDH and our local Health Department.

- On July 21, 2020, the Patrick County School Board met and approved Option 1 with a blended learning model of staggered schedule and virtual/remote learning beginning on August 11, 2020.
- On August 7, 2020, the Patrick County School Board held a special called meeting to change to Option 2 which is a total virtual/remote learning model beginning on August 11, 2020. A special meeting to re-evaluate the plan is scheduled to be held on August 27, 2020.
- On August 27, 2020, the Patrick County School Board held a special called meeting to change to option 1 with a blended learning model of staggered schedule and virtual/remote learning beginning on September 14, 2020, with face coverings required on buses and in school.
- On October 12, 2020, students with disabilities and English Learners are invited to attend on a 4-day schedule.
- On January 11, 2021, students with 504 plans are invited to attend on a 4-day schedule. On February 1, 2021, at-risk students in grades PK - 2 are invited to attend on a 4-day schedule.

- On February 11, 2021, the School Board approved the plan to invite all students to attend on a 4-day schedule beginning March 15, 2021.
- On February 18, 2021, at-risk 3rd grade and high school students are invited to attend on a 4-day schedule.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Patrick County Public Schools 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.

Patrick County Public Schools has established a COVID-19 team consisting of division leadership. The PCPS COVID-19 team maintains close contact with the Emergency Services Coordinator. The collaboration between emergency services and school officials has included conversations with local health officials.

Attendance monitoring - PCPS will monitor absenteeism to identify trends in employee and student absences due to illness. PCPS will work collaboratively with VDH to report and monitor trends.

Communication - COVID-related policies and procedures will be communicated to staff and families via the school website, School Messenger, and/or email. Should there be an exposure or outbreak, local health officials, staff, and families will be notified immediately while maintaining confidentiality. Staff and students will be trained in COVID-19 mitigation strategies.

Health Services - PCPS health services staff will maintain non-COVID-19 health-related services for both staff and students. Health staff will be provided with medical grade PPE. Instructional staff will participate in mental health and well-being training. School counselors will have designated time to provide social-emotional learning support.

Education - Patrick County Public Schools recognizes the importance of promoting healthy hygiene and providing COVID-19 prevention education to staff, students and families. In order to facilitate these discussions, PCPS will utilize a variety of educational formats including training, School Messenger reminders, website postings, and posters throughout buildings. Safe Schools training for staff will include *Coronavirus Awareness*. This training discusses hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and staying home when sick. CDC posters to include: How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering, Stop the Spread of Germs, How to Protect Yourself and Others, and How to Wash Your Hands

Healthy Hygiene - Patrick County Public Schools will maintain an adequate inventory of healthy hygiene supplies to include hand soap, hand sanitizer, and tissues at each school/building.

Physical Distancing - Patrick County Public Schools will reduce the number of students who physically attend school on an alternating schedule to ensure social distancing is maintained. Communal spaces will be closed when unable to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Nutrition - PCPS nutrition department will serve students both breakfast and lunch. Students will eat both meals in individual classrooms or the cafeteria following social distancing guidelines. The nutrition

department will utilize disposable products as available to minimize contact with shared surfaces. When unavailable, materials will be properly sanitized and disinfected according to CDC guidelines. Students will be permitted to bring their own meals.

Health Screening - Patrick County Public Schools will implement health screening questionnaires for all staff and students daily. Staff members will self-assess each day before entering the building. Questionnaires will be communicated to families so that students may self-assess before boarding the bus or entering the school. Upon arrival, students will be screened for temperature and symptoms before entering the building.

Hygiene Practices - Patrick County Public Schools will implement cleaning and disinfecting protocols for all departments and buildings. School buses will be disinfected each day. All school staff will receive training on cleaning and disinfecting due to COVID-19. Custodial staff will disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and between attendance groups. Custodial staff will receive training on new materials and products and ensure proper storage and adequate inventory are maintained. Hand sanitizer stations will be placed in each classroom and common area. To minimize exposure due to shared supplies and devices, Patrick County Public Schools will continue its 1:1 technology device initiative and promote individual workspace and supply use.

Systems - Patrick County Public Schools maintenance department will ensure ventilation systems operate properly by continuing routine maintenance schedules. Water testing schedules will continue to maintain high water quality. Students will be encouraged to bring water from home.

In addition, Patrick 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 - Patrick County Public Schools will require that students and staff wear a cloth face-covering/mask as recommended by the CDC guidelines.

- A cloth face-covering needs to be worn at all times when at least six-foot physical distance cannot be maintained; however if six feet of distance is not feasible, a combination of face coverings and a minimum of three feet should be maintained between everyone present. (masks as medically and developmentally appropriate)
- CDC adaptations and alternatives should be considered when possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.
- Do not place a cloth face covering on young children under age 2, who have trouble breathing or are unconscious.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed daily.
- Encourage student's/staff to avoid touching one's face while wearing cloth covering.
- PCPS recommends that students and staff wear face coverings in situations where social distancing is difficult.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to send your child with a mask.
- School health clinics will have on hand extra masks for students/staff as needed.

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing

- Social distancing is required in each of our buildings and on our school buses. The use of communal spaces has been restricted and previously unused areas of the building have been opened to allow for more social distancing. Outside areas have been utilized for instruction (weather permitting), plexiglass barriers installed between work areas, and seating charts utilized on school buses to provide adequate social distancing.
- Students initially transitioned back to school on an A day/B day hybrid schedule so social distancing of six feet could be maintained in all areas of the buildings and fewer students allowed in the buildings. Student groupings within classrooms for pullout instruction are encouraged.
- Floor tape and stickers are utilized to help younger students identify proper distancing protocol.
- Improved air filters were added to each school's HVAC units to purify and clean the air circulating through each room.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The following preventive health strategies for staff and students are emphasized:

- Encourage individuals to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, place the used tissue in the opened-top wastebasket, and then wash their hands. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cover-your-cough_poster.pdf
- If tissues are unavailable, encourage individuals to cough or sneeze into the upper sleeve or elbow, not onto their hands. Then they should wash their hands. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/resources/posters.html>
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol content and rub until the contents are dry (hand sanitizing stations located throughout the school and available in all classrooms). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>
- Encourage individuals to avoid touching their faces with their hands as much as possible. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities

Environmental Cleaning Procedures

The PCPS custodial staff and all designated staff follow CDC guidelines for cleaning at all school sites and school facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

The custodial and all designated staff will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces/areas within the school setting using EPA-approved disinfectants.

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

All School staff will follow manufacturer's guidelines for correct application and use EPA approved disinfectants. Products will be stored properly and kept out of reach and away from children, preferably in a locked cabinet.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting will be maintained daily and as needed to provide a safe and healthy environment for faculty, students and staff.

The Custodial staff and other designated staff will wear PPE in accordance with the PCPS OSHA/Bloodborne Pathogens Plan when sanitizing and disinfecting.

The PCPS custodial staff and other designated staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and areas within the school setting using EPA-approved disinfectants.

The custodial staff and all designated staff will follow CDC guidelines for cleaning at all school sites and school facilities.

The custodial staff and other designated staff will intensify cleaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Designated Cleaning Days) The custodial staff will clean frequently throughout the school day disinfecting the following surfaces/items listed below per CDC guidelines.

- Doorknobs and handles
- Desktops
- Sink/faucet handles
- Restroom knobs/doors
- Water refill stations/water fountains (when in use)
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops that students frequently come into contact with (office, library)
- Handrails
- Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
- Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators
- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared desktops
- Shared computer keyboards and mice-shared computers should have signage posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, covers may be used to protect the keys.
- Bus seats and handrails
- It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high touch or high risk (e.g. floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets).
- Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or cleaner appropriate for the material.
- The custodial staff and other designated staff will intensify cleaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Designated Cleaning Days) The custodial staff will frequently disinfect the following surfaces/items listed below per CDC guidelines. The custodial staff will reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for staff and students by cleaning and disinfecting by following the [reopening guidance from the CDC for cleaning and disinfection schools](#), a [cleaning and disinfection decision tree](#) (PDF), and an infographic on [cleaning your facility when someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19](#) (PDF).

All custodial staff will participate in the annual Blood Borne Pathogen training, COVID-19, and environmental cleaning. They will participate in professional development such as anaphylaxis, diabetes, epinephrine, asthma, and seizures, etc., and proper cleaning in the school setting. Training will be conducted by the school nurses and training videos will be available for custodial staff using CDC information.

As mentioned earlier PCPSD purchased and installed air cleaners for each school's HVAC system as well as stand-alone units for athletic facilities. Electrostatic disinfection systems were purchased for janitorial staff and the transportation department to be used daily.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments

If a student or any staff member is suspected or has been identified as COVID-19 positive:

- Report information to school administrators or school nurses at each site. The PCPS school board office will be notified by the school nurse at each school site if they have a reported or suspected positive COVID-19 case.
- The school board will report this information(COVID-19 suspected or confirmed) to the health department. They will work in conjunction with the Patrick County Department of Health to perform contact tracing and to identify anyone that may need to self-isolate or be tested. Based on local health department recommendations, students/staff may be quarantined.
- If the school system is recommended to close for a period of time, faculty/staff, students, and parents/guardians will be notified by the Division Superintendent. Information may be shared via division website, email, school messenger, phone call, and social media websites. School closures may also be broadcasted on radio and television. These methods will also be used to communicate new policies, orientation information, and training.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>
- The definition of exposure is the same for every setting and every type of classroom. When assessing a person's risk of exposure to COVID-19, close contact means being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 while not wearing adequate personal protective equipment for longer than 15 minutes. If someone is within six feet of a person with lab-confirmed COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, that person is considered to have been exposed.
- Areas of the school where ill individuals spent time while infectious may need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfections while unaffected areas will continue to function as usual.
- Decisions regarding the closure of a section of the school or the entire school will depend on the number of ill persons who have been sent home for a period of isolation and the number of exposed contacts who have been identified and placed into quarantine.
- The extent of the school facility and teaching staff affected by these factors will be a factor in determining whether education services can continue to be provided.

Diagnostic and screening testing - PCPS works with the local health department, doctor's offices and pharmacies to test students and staff.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities - Patrick County Public Schools provided opportunities for the Moderna vaccinations to all staff. Approximately 50% of staff received both vaccinations.

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

- All students currently being serviced through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan will continue to receive accommodations and instruction as prescribed in their plan. Should health mitigation challenges interfere with our ability to provide these services as required, PCPS

will request and convene an IEP or 504 team meeting to discuss resolutions that would ensure the needs of our students are still being met. Parents may also request an IEP or 504 meeting at any time.

Coordination with state and local health officials -

- Patrick County Public School System follows the recommendations and best practice guidelines from the CDC, VDH, and VDOE.
- Patrick County Public Schools receives guidance from Dr. Kerry Gateley, Director of West-Piedmont Health District, and local Patrick County Health Department Staff regarding COVID-19 and guidelines for schools.
- Patrick County Public Schools participate in all webinars, information sessions, and training sponsored by the CDC, VDH, and VDOE.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Patrick 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's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Patrick County Public Schools has identified areas to be addressed in the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year as operational infrastructure to support learning, new instruction for all learners, identification of instructional gaps and student needs, and remote learning plans for future instruction.

Plan for school schedules - For the 2021-2022 school year, PCPS plans to offer in-person instruction five days a week and school schedules will not be shortened. Students with a documented need who are approved through an application process may learn virtually through a partnership with an online provider.

Transportation - School buses will enact new capacity limits and seating guidelines, per health and safety expectations issued by the Virginia Department of Health. Buses will be cleaned and sanitized between uses in accordance with guidelines. Masks will be provided and required during bus routes.

Technology - PCPS students will be issued devices to be used according to the current grade level. K - 3: Ipad and grades 4 - 12: Chromebooks. Whether learning takes place primarily in an online environment or face-to-face, digital resources and platforms including VA Virtual and Google Classroom will ensure students have access to high-quality learning tools.

Communication - Opportunities for conversations with stakeholders regarding plans and monitoring implementation are essential. Patrick County Public Schools utilizes information from division surveys to develop and refine plans within each scenario. Frequent and consistent communication from the school division will be utilized to maintain transparency. Communication methods will include School Messenger, LMS, email, phone calls, mailings, digital communication platforms, and text messaging.

Instruction for ALL Students - Our commitment is to ensure that all Patrick County students have access to equitable educational opportunities. Patrick County Public Schools maintains a focus on equity as the center of our work as we serve all students. Vulnerable and special populations will be considered to

ensure appropriate instruction while complying with state and federal requirements. Services for special populations such as students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged, gifted learners, and young learners will be considered based on specific student needs.

Identification of Instructional Gaps and Student Needs - PCPS will use a variety of formative assessments including CIP early benchmarks, running records, Brigance, PALS, VKRP, teacher-created assessments, etc. to measure learning gaps and needs. Professional development will be provided to address instructional needs. Remediation will be provided using small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, and online interventions.

Social-emotional learning is critical to re-engage students, rebuild relationships and school communities and create equitable learning environments for all students. Training will be provided for all instructional staff in the area of mental health and well-being. School counselors will have dedicated time to provide social-emotional learning support. Patrick County Public Schools will utilize existing PBIS strategies to support social-emotional learning and foster student confidence and competence. Formal and informal strategies may include morning meetings, advisory periods, PBIS strategies, counseling sessions, etc. Using data from both formative assessments and social-emotional assessments, teachers will revise curricula/pacing to address missing content as a result of extended school closures.

Special consideration will be given to missing content from the previous year, identification of content connections between grade levels, and student progression toward learning goals. Vertical planning within schools will allow teams to identify and ensure missing content is presented to students in a variety of formats.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

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

In May 2021, PCPS sought input from all staff through the use of a survey that asked specific questions regarding federal funds.

On May 21, 2021, PCPS conducted a parent involvement meeting to discuss the ARP ESSER Plan.

On June 3, 2021, PCPS sought additional input from the community by providing a public comment opportunity specifically for the ARP ESSER Plan

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

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

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

- The plan is posted at <https://patrick.k12.va.us>
- The plan is available in English and Spanish languages
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Andrea Cassell, Assistant Superintendent (276-694-3163) 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 Ann Fulcher, Director of Special Education at (276) 694-3163.