



Health and Safety Plan Guidance: Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5

Initial Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Date of Last Review: February 6, 2024

Date of Last Revision: August 23, 2023

Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, hereinafter referred to as a *Health and Safety Plan*.

Based on ARP requirements, 90 percent of ARP ESSER funds will be distributed to school districts and charter schools based on their relative share of Title I-A funding in FY 2020-2021. **Given Federally required timelines, LEAs eligible to apply for and receive this portion of the ARP ESSER funding must submit a Health and Safety Plan that meets ARP Act requirements to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by Friday, July 30, 2021, regardless of when the LEA submits its ARP ESSER application.**

Each LEA must create a Health and Safety Plan that addresses how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, and which will serve as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. The Health and Safety Plan should be tailored to the unique needs of each LEA and its schools and must take into account public comment related to the development of, and subsequent revisions to, the Health and Safety Plan.



Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5 Health and Safety Plan

1. **How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?**

The IU will continue to work closely with our school districts, sites, and other educational entities to ensure the safe operation of our various programs across the regions we serve. We will also continue to make decisions based on guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), the Erie County Department of Health (ECDH), the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All practices and procedures will align with these entities in order to support prevention and mitigations efforts in response to the fluid conditions that may arise where the IU holds the authority to implement and/or enforce.

In addition to the implementation of recommended prevention and mitigation strategies, we will continue to follow the health and safety plans of the districts and sites we serve in order to maintain the safety of our staff and students.

The CDC recommends the integration of various prevention and control components, which we will ensure is reflected in our mitigation efforts. Such components may include the consistent implementation of layered prevention strategies, consideration of indicators of community transmission, and phased prevention strategies based on levels of community transmission.

Prevention strategies may include the correct use of PPE as ordered or recommended by the PADOH, PDE, CDC, physical distancing when appropriate and possible, continued handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintain healthy facilities, and contact tracing in conjunction with the ECDH.

Additionally, we will continue to support our local districts and agencies in their efforts to vaccinate the community and student bodies of their districts.



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

The IU will continue to follow the school or agency needs in regard to the continuity of services. We will continue to move between face to face instruction, hybrid, or virtual learning environments based on the students we serve, as deemed necessary. Our directors, supervisors, and teachers will work together with the schools and agencies to ensure that not just the academic needs of students are met, but all of the needs of our students are met. A variety of digital tools and resources will be implemented to ensure effective and meaningful supports are in place. Such digital tools may include Teams, Zoom, live streaming, or Google Classroom as delivery methods. Communication tools may include Remind, Google, Teams, WhatsApp, or any of a variety of other methods of communication. We will continue to provide devices to students and families that may not have them as well. Given the remote nature of some of our schools and sites, printed materials and packets will be available if internet is not an option for our students and families.

Fully online or hybrid professional development opportunities will continue to be an option for the teachers and others in our area as well. We will offer smaller, more frequent training sessions in order to meet the changing needs of our districts.

We will also continue to require an individualized approach for students with disabilities consistent with the student's IEP or 504 plan. We will consider adaptations and alternatives to COVID mitigation strategies while continuing all efforts to protect students, teachers, and staff to the great extent possible.

As conditions change throughout the year in relation to COVID protocols, we will ensure communication is maintained with all employees, districts, and stakeholders in the programs and regions we serve.



3. **Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.**

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
a. Universal and correct wearing of masks ;	<p>We will follow masking guidance as required by the ECDH, PADOH, CDC, or as directed by the Executive Director or the IU5 Board of Directors.</p> <p>Additional mitigation strategies such as masking is a personal choice and employees will be supported and encouraged to employ such measures for themselves as deem necessary.</p> <p>Additional mitigation strategies such as masking is a personal choice and students and parents will be supported and encouraged to employ such measures for themselves as they deem necessary.</p> <p>Any mask requirements will comply with a student’s IEP or 504 plan.</p>
b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);	<p>We will follow physical distancing guidance as required by the ECDH, PADOH, CDC, or as directed by the Executive Director or the IU5 Board of Directors.</p> <p>Any physical distancing requirements will comply with a student’s IEP or 504 plan.</p>
c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette ;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will follow the current CDC, PADOH, or PDE guidelines for handwashing and respiratory etiquette to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. ○ The use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. ○ Avoidance of touching the eyes, nose, and mouth. ○ The covering of coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough or sneeze into your elbow. • Classroom and site-based programs will follow the guidance established by those districts and sites or the IU’s, whichever



ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
	<p>ensures the greatest level of health and safety and protection against COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage will continue to be posted to remind students and staff of proper handwashing techniques.
<p>d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will follow the current CDC, PADOH, or PDE guidelines for cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refrain from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. ○ Clean your telephone, computer keyboard, and other high-touch items at the end of each workday. ○ Share in the cleaning and disinfecting of communal equipment such as printers throughout the building. • Classroom and site-based programs will follow the guidance established by those districts and sites or the IU's, whichever ensures the greatest level of health and safety and protection against COVID-19.
<p>e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;</p>	<p>In alignment with requirements in Title 28 Pa. Code Chapter 27 (relating to communicable and non-communicable diseases), we will report positive staff and student cases of COVID-19 to ECDH or PADOH as required.</p>
<p>f. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will monitor their health prior to reporting to and while at the workplace / school. • Students in non-IU classroom settings will follow the guidance established by those districts and sites. • Students in IU classrooms will follow IU guidance in relation to screening and testing. • If any staff or IU student is exhibiting signs of an infectious disease they are asked to stay home and / or seek medical guidance following the usual procedures for reporting off of work or school. • If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID 19, the individual should follow CDC guidelines and recommendations. •



ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities ;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to coordinate with the ECDH to share and provide information regarding vaccination opportunities in the area.
h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will follow all IEP and 504 accommodations with respect to health and safety policies as documented.
i. Coordination with state and local health officials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will maintain existing partnerships with the ECDH, PADOH, and PDE through emails, phone calls, and meetings. More correspondence and coordination will occur as needed and situations arise throughout the year.

Expectations are based on mandates and guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Erie County Department of Health (ECDH), the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). All expectations are subject to change based on local and state trends as well as updated mandates and recommendations.

The LEA's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the LEA's publicly available website by July 30, 2021.* The ARP Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated. The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Each LEA will upload in the eGrants system its updated Health and Safety Plan and webpage URL where the plan is located on the LEA's publicly available website.

The ARP Act requires LEAs to review their Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and



reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

LEAs may use the template to revise their current Health and Safety Plans to meet ARP requirements and ensure all stakeholders are fully informed of the LEA's plan to safely resume instructional and non-instructional school activities, including in-person learning, for the current school year. An LEA may use a different plan template or format provided it includes all the elements required by the ARP Act, as listed above.

* The July 30 deadline applies only to school districts and charter schools that received federal Title I-A funds in FY 2020-2021 and intend to apply for and receive ARP ESSER funding.

Additional Resources

LEAs are advised to review the following resources when developing their Health and Safety Plans:

- [CDC K-12 School Operational Strategy](#)
- [PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [PDE Roadmap for Education Leaders](#)
- [PDE Accelerated Learning Thorough an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)