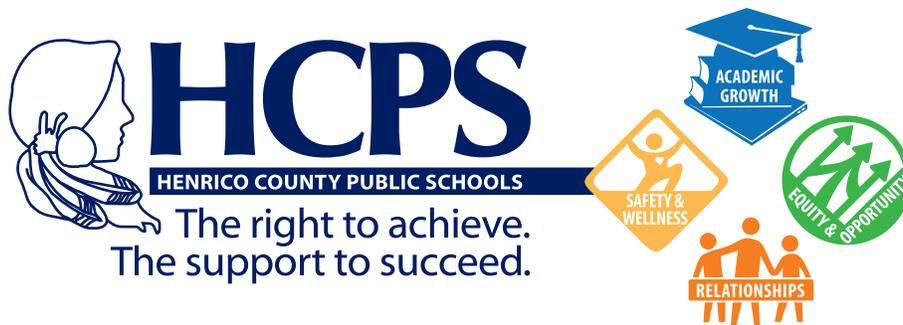


# Henrico County Public Schools

## Safe Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services



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*This document exists in compliance with Section 2001(1)(1) of the ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education's Interim Final Rule requiring each LEA that receives ARP ESSER III funds to submit a plan that describes how it will safely return to in-person instruction and ensure continuity of services, including LEAs that have already returned to in-person instruction.*

*Original June 1, 2021  
Revised June 1, 2022*

## 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 Henrico 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 the appropriate member of the HCPS COVID-19 Task Force:

- Dr. Beth Teigen, Chief of Staff | 804-652-3720
- Dr. Ingrid Grant, Chief of School Leadership | 804-652-3676
- Dr. Lesley Hughes, Chief of Learning | 804-652-3754
- Lenny Pritchard, Chief of Operations | 804-652-3620
- Francine Bouldin, Chief of Human Resources | 804-652-3656
- Susan Moore, Director of Facilities | 804-652-3899
- Robin Gilbert, Supervisor of School Health Services | 804-343-6504
- Cortney Berry, HCPS Emergency Manager | 804-652-3511

## Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Henrico County Public Schools has implemented a COVID-19 Task Force to provide guidance, information and support in all areas related to the pandemic. The Task Force's central focus has been on protecting the health and safety of students, faculty and staff. The Task Force is composed of a subgroup, the Transition Team, and each school has identified an administrator to serve as the school-based liaison to the Task Force. The Transition Team's objective has been to ensure all schools and administration buildings follow all health and safety guidelines and governor's orders, as well as provide training and updates to school-based liaisons and staff regarding all COVID-19 mitigation measures. The school-based liaisons will continue to oversee personal protective equipment needs for their school, as well as ensure any information pertaining to COVID-19 is shared with the appropriate audience, whether that be staff, students, families or visitors.

In addition, Henrico County Public Schools has adopted practices on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **Wearing of masks**

Henrico County Public Schools continues to follow the latest available guidance provided by the CDC, the Virginia Department of Health and the Governor with regard to mask-wearing on school grounds and while participating or attending school events (indoors, outdoors, etc.) Online training will be provided to staff, students and families, as appropriate, in the proper use of multilayered cloth face coverings (bandanas, neck gaiters and masks with exhalation valves or vents are not acceptable).

## **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing**

Classrooms and communal areas will not be limited in occupancy, but schools will provide physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.

## **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

Online training will be provided to staff, students and families on effective COVID-19 and illness-prevention strategies, including training in hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

## **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

HCPS continues utilizing cleaning protocols consistent with CDC recommendations, to include using cleaning products identified as approved disinfectants for the SAR-CoV-2 virus.

Reusable masks will be available to students and staff as needed. Each school will receive an adequate supply of PPE supplies to meet current CDC recommendations. These supplies will be replenished as required until the current inventory is depleted.

All the HVAC systems have been reviewed and adjusted for optimal ventilation in accordance with CDC and ASHRAE recommendations. Exhaust fans have been checked and repaired as required. System filters have been upgraded where existing systems allowed and systems that couldn't have upgraded filters have had the filters changed on a more frequent basis.

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

Contact tracing will be handled at the school level. Positive cases or exposures will be reported to the school site and information collected. A REDCap entry will be submitted by the school to the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts (RHHD) for contact tracing when three or more cases are suspected to be connected. HCPS will provide the return-to-work or return-to-school dates for both employees and students. RHHD will need to complete contact tracing and communicate any confirmed outbreaks to HCPS School Health Services.

## **Diagnostic testing**

Diagnostic BionaxNOW at-home COVID-19 tests are available at all school locations for students and staff who have been identified as exposures to a positive case or who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

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

Henrico County Public Schools School Health Services will continue to work in collaboration with students, families, schools and providers to meet the medical, health, and safety needs of our students. Health plans are designed specifically for an individual student. School Health Services also participates in 504 meetings to address health concerns.

## Coordination with state and local health officials

Members of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts continue to meet at least biweekly with the HCPS COVID-19 Health Committee to review data and any new guidance from the CDC and the VDH. In addition, HCPS School Health Services continues to collaborate with the RHHD for contact tracing as described above.

## Section 3: Continuity of Services

Henrico 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.

### Academic Needs

- Students will have the opportunity to continue to learn in-person or virtually based on their previously selected options within the deadlines and capacity limits communicated by the division. Families wishing to transition to in-person learning from virtual learning should contact the principal of their zoned school to discuss the feasibility.
- The Department of Teaching, Learning and Innovation is committed to five distinct actions to support learning and move students forward during the Summer Academy and into the 2022-23 school year. These are:
  - o Align teaching and learning instructional practices.
    - Continue the transformation of newly developed Deeper Learning curriculum.
    - Integrate all digital resources into the curriculum.
    - Expand strategic development and utilization of Schoology, the learning management system used by HCPS.
    - Establish coherence of instructional components (CREM, SEL, Practitioner's Guide, teaching and learning "look fors") through the creation of a teaching and learning framework.
    - Implement the HCPS Life-Ready Literacy Plan.
  - o Review and respond to student progress data from a variety of sources: SOLs, digital resources, PowerSchool, etc.
  - o Provide and monitor professional learning for Tier I instructional practices.
  - o Establish intervention and remediation protocols and resources.
  - o Use the school quality planning process to identify needs and monitor academic progress at all 72 schools and program centers.
- Students will continue on a full-day instructional schedule that will include five days a week of learning.
- The elementary intervention framework has been refreshed to include consistent practices and resources to address learning loss.

- Intervention and remediation continue to be provided to pre-K through 12th grade students using criteria such as assessment data and grades, to determine how to best address unfinished learning and mastery of concepts.
- To address continued COVID-19 safety concerns and K-12 students who have thrived in virtual learning, the Henrico Virtual Academy (HVA) serves as a fully virtual option to meet the needs of students who desire to continue learning virtually. At the elementary level, students have access to the same courses as their in-person elementary peers. Students have rigorous and engaging options for English, math, science, social studies, world languages, health and physical education, fine arts, and CTE at the secondary level. This includes access to accelerated, Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. All course offerings are posted on the HVA website. Due to staffing limitations, secondary offerings may be limited compared to the traditional school setting.
- Fifteen reading specialists at the elementary level were hired to support literacy instruction.
- Continuation of digital resources introduced for the 2020-2021 school year.

## Social and Emotional Needs

To address students' social-emotional learning, all students have access to a wide variety of resources, including:

- A comprehensive school counseling program that includes a preventative school counseling curriculum, small-group counseling, individual counseling, crisis response, and appraisal and advisement directed at improving students' mental and social-emotional well-being.
- Students needing more intensive social-emotional learning and mental health support have access to school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers through a defined referral system. HCPS expanded its staff in the 2021-22 school year to include the continuance of 10 school counseling positions originally funded through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, and the addition of 30 school counseling positions because of supplemental ESSER II funding and HCPS has added 21 full-time Student Support & Wellness positions for 2022-2023, to include school psychologists, school nurses, and school social workers. This enables HCPS to bring the school staffing ratios down to a divisionwide average of one school counselor to every 325 students and significantly increase the delivery of preventative, universal counseling curriculum, as well as increase student access to advanced tiered support and intervention measures. In addition, two social worker positions were added using ESSER III funding from 2021-22 and will continue to be funded for 2022-2023. Furthermore, HCPS has added 5 new school counseling positions for the 2022-2023 school year.
- This year, HCPS fully implemented CASEL-aligned, research-based social-emotional learning curricula and lessons at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
  - o At the elementary level, all students continue to participate in daily morning meetings with a social-emotional learning focus, and receive weekly curriculum instruction from the Harmony social-emotional learning program to foster communication, understanding, connection and community, inside and outside of school hours.
  - o Middle and high school students continue to receive weekly instruction from the "Second Step" social-emotional learning curriculum and/or direct instruction

developed using the CASEL framework during advisory periods to assist in the creation of supportive, successful learning environments uniquely equipped to encourage students to thrive in and out of school.

- HCPS received the VDOE social-emotional learning standards which will be shared with all teachers and gradually embedded into daily lessons for students in grades K-12 as determined appropriate by a committee established during the 2021-22 school year.
- HCPS will be providing optional social-emotional learning surveys to students multiple times a year, beginning in the winter of the 2021-22 school year. The survey for students is aligned with CASEL's core competencies and includes targeted questions and prompts that will allow the Student Support and Wellness team to gather feedback and actionable data related to student well-being and social emotional learning to inform the approach and SEL supports for students at the division and school level.

Just as important is addressing the social and emotional wellness of HCPS employees. To do this, all staff members have access to:

- A "Social-Emotional Learning" group in Schoology to help employees find resources to support and facilitate social-emotional learning for themselves and their students.
- A "Wellness, Self-Care and Community Resources" group in Schoology to support personal wellness and self-care. Among these resources is an adult SEL toolkit, containing adult SEL measures, strategies and activities, along with additional materials focused specifically on anxiety, stress, self-care, mindfulness, and coping skills for teachers and staff.
- Links and information to community and online resources, vetted by school-based mental health professionals, to use and share with families.
- Employee Assistance Program services and counseling through Optima Health.
- School division leadership has prioritized wellness and self-care as an area of focus for professional learning by including wellness and self-care on its 2021-22 Leadership Roadmap. Through this vehicle, the Department of Student Support and Wellness will provide targeted opportunities for administrators to model and practice wellness and self-care activities that can be immediately implemented with their own staff.
- Additionally, HCPS provided a teacher and staff SEL survey in the fall and at multiple points throughout the year to gather teacher and staff perceptions of their professional well-being; capacity and efficacy around supporting academic, social and emotional learning; professional learning opportunities; cultural competency and awareness; school climate and culture; and relationships with colleagues, families and school leadership. This data will help division leaders and administrators prioritize support for teachers and staff, deliver targeted professional development, and create a more positive working environment.

To ensure that HCPS faculty and staff are prepared to prioritize social-emotional learning as they welcome students back to school in the fall of 2022, all staff require a basic level of exposure to trauma awareness or trauma-informed strategies.

- This past year, 100% of school employees completed one of two trauma modules in SafeSchools

(Trauma Awareness or Trauma-Informed Strategies) based on their current position within HCPS. Moving forward, any new HCPS employee will be required to complete this trauma training as part of their onboarding process.

- Staff also had the opportunity to complete an in-depth virtual course, “Building Community & Supporting [Social-Emotional Learning] Online,” through HCPS U, the school division’s virtual learning campus. Staff continue to have access to the “Surviving and Thriving: Trauma and Resilience” Schoology module developed by Jon Richardson-Lauve with ChildSavers to enhance knowledge and application of trauma-informed practices.
- In January 2021, schools and programs completed the Trauma Responsive School Implementation Assessment. Based on the review of data submitted, individual school and division responses were compiled and schools were provided targeted resources and opportunities to support identified areas of growth in their trauma-informed practices. Moving forward, the Trauma Responsive School Implementation Assessment will be completed yearly to monitor school and school division progress toward becoming more trauma-informed. HCPS Student Support and Wellness staff members will continue to directly support this work and offer more in-depth, community-connected, professional learning experiences with individual teachers and building leaders as requested.
- Numerous staff on the school-based mental health teams hold the status of certified trauma practitioner, or the equivalent, a designation which allows them to provide expert guidance in trauma-informed practices. In addition to staff with the formal certification, even more have completed the coursework required for this certificate, as well as other targeted trauma response training.
- The Trauma Advisory Committee continues to meet regularly and actively supports schools choosing to prioritize work related to trauma-informed practices.
- In addition, elementary and middle school staff will continue to receive an annual refresher in training on positive behavioral interventions and support. This will focus on the increased importance of Tier 1 classroom practices and how to incorporate the school’s intervention team to help students in need of Tier-2 practices. Elementary and middle schools’ school-based intervention teams will continue to receive annual training on how to help staff members use their teams when they think a student may require more targeted or intensive support.
- A Modified Student Wellness Wednesday approach began in November with expanded academic and social emotional support. Throughout the instructional day on Wednesdays, teachers are encouraged to maintain a focus on student wellness through planned content lessons and activities. Furthermore, each Wednesday, extended advisory lessons (secondary) and morning meetings (elementary) will be offered to engage students in increased social-emotional learning lessons and activities. Teachers will be provided flexibility during the instructional day to design classroom time to provide more opportunities for student/teacher meetings, time for students to complete make-up work, attend club meetings, and work on Passion Projects and enrichment activities. School leaders are encouraged to consider offering school wide Wellness Wednesday activities through extracurricular events as appropriate and possible. Examples include: staff/student health minded activities (dance/group exercise), walk and talk at lunch, and the use of outdoor spaces.

Additionally, the Student Support and Wellness Department has prioritized the need to increase stakeholder awareness and access to the expansive repository of knowledge, skills, and resources our team members and our community partners can provide.

- A dedicated, centralized webpage that can be easily accessed from the HCPS website is available so that students, families and staff across the division can locate important contacts and resources consistently, quickly and efficiently.
- The Central Office Student Support and Wellness Staff will continue participating in monthly meetings facilitated by the Department of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity; English Language Learner Information sessions in collaboration with the Department of Family and Community Engagement, town hall meetings in collaboration with School Board members, and any other opportunities that will assist in increasing the level of community outreach.
- Student Support and Wellness staff regularly communicate with students and families through a variety of platforms, and help facilitate connections with community resources and agencies, as needed.
- To offer anytime-anywhere access to community agency contacts and reduce the number of places families need to look for information, each school-based mental health team will also be provided with a webpage template built with consistent local and regional information as well as activities and resources that can be further personalized for each school community and posted on the school's website.

### **Mental Health Needs**

- HCPS' current model of school-based mental health clearly identifies the individuals assigned to each building who are uniquely qualified to provide these services in a way that is appropriate to the learning environment. HCPS school-based mental health providers (school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers) are clinically trained to provide counseling and other services to students within a school setting. All HCPS school-based mental health providers are uniquely qualified to provide mental and behavioral health prevention services, early identification and intervention, as well as crisis referral and follow-up services to students and their families.
- Staffing levels increased in the 2021-22 school year to include the continuance of 10 school counseling positions originally funded through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund and the addition of 30 school counseling positions as a result of supplemental ESSER II funding. Five new school counseling positions will be added for the 2022-23 school year. This will bring the school staffing ratios down to a division wide average of one school counselor to every 325 students and significantly increase the delivery of preventative, counseling curricula, as well as increase student access to advanced tiered support and intervention measures.
- The Student Support and Wellness Department has identified and secured several additional, evidence-based intervention programs in preparation for the upcoming year, such as Coping Cat, The C.A.T Project, Check & Connect that will be coordinated and implemented by existing Student Support and Wellness staff, as appropriate.

- Working collaboratively with the Department of Teaching and Learning, the school-based mental health providers implemented the evidence-based prevention program “Signs of Suicide” or “SOS” in all middle and high schools during the 2021-22 school year, which will continue next year.
- Continued partnerships with Henrico County Mental Health and Developmental Services and additional community agencies continue to increase students’ access to additional targeted, intensive support as needed. Teaming with community-based providers and agencies ensures that services provided in school are appropriate to the learning context and those that are provided outside of school are appropriately linked to and supported in the school setting, with the goal of reducing the stress on families while supporting and honoring their role as primary caregivers and decision-makers regarding their child’s development. Additionally, HCPS started work to onboard Virginia’s Handle with Care program for the 2022-23 school year to assist in identifying and supporting students who may need more trauma-focused mental health intervention at school anytime Henrico County law enforcement or emergency responder encounters a child during a call.
- School-based mental health professionals remain available to provide support in the aftermath of a crisis that facilitate a return to normalcy, are sustainable, and can help to identify and work with students in need of more intense or ongoing intervention. Based on the PREPaRE model of crisis response, the Department of Student Support and Wellness is in the process of creating the HCPS School Mental Health Crisis Response, to provide a consistent, guided framework to identify and meet the mental health needs of HCPS students and staff in the aftermath of an acute, traumatic stressor or crisis in any HCPS school community. PREPaRE is an acronym for:
  - P—Prevent and prepare for crises
  - R—Reaffirm physical health and welfare, and perceptions of safety and security
  - E—Evaluate psychological trauma risk
  - P—Provide interventions
  - a—and
  - R—Respond to mental health needs
  - E—Examine the effectiveness of crisis preparedness

## Student Health Needs

- Contact tracing transitioned from School Health Services to the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts (RHHD) during the 2021-22 school year. School Health Services continues to partner with RHHD to collaborate with the individual schools when there are three or more cases suspected of being connected. RHHD will follow HCPS cases and exposures as the primary contact tracing entity.
- For the remainder of the 2021-22 school year, schools continue to educate staff and students and the mitigation strategies in place to maintain everyone’s health. Most schools are maintaining their health isolation rooms through June 2022, and they are staffed with trained clinic assistants. Staff, based on their roles and CDC recommendations, will have the appropriate personal protective equipment.

## School Nutrition Services

Staff remained flexible regarding how food nutrition services were provided to school communities in 2021-22. This includes:

- In-school food service for students learning in person.
- School nutrition hub options for Henrico Virtual Academy (HVA) students to receive meals.
- Continued localized distribution of weekend food bags through HCPS family advocates for targeted schools and families.

The HCPS Family and Community Engagement Department continues to stay connected and responsive to the nutritional needs of students. Through connections to pantries, local food banks, and community organizations, efforts remain focused on being resource connectors for families served within HCPS. The departments of School Nutrition Services and Family and Community Engagement will continue to respond to students' needs throughout the 2022-23 school year to ensure they are ready to learn.

## Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

Staff, families and students have had opportunities to provide public comment and feedback through multiple venues, including the following:

- An opportunity to submit public comment online for each School Board meeting, and the comments submitted are shared with the School Board, Superintendent and Division Leadership Team at each School Board meeting.
- An opportunity to provide public comment in-person at School Board monthly meetings.
- Direct emails to the School Board, the Superintendent, and/or the Henrico County Public Schools COVID-19 Health Committee.
- Traditional lines of communication have been utilized to allow parents and community members to offer feedback directly to principals and directors, and these efforts include town hall meetings, parent coffee chats, focus groups, surveys, etc.

In addition to the venues mentioned above, Henrico County Public Schools sought feedback specific to the use of Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act funding prior to the formal acceptance of the funds in June 2020, as the Board of Supervisors conducted a related public hearing prior to their appropriation of the funds to the 2019-20 school year budget on June 9, 2020. The School Board received a review of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief II Funding prior to accepting Henrico County Public Schools' allocation. The ESSER II allocation provides funding for instructional, mental health, and other public health issues negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ESSER II plan was presented to the School Board in April 2021 and the Board of Supervisors in June 2021. There was public comment at each meeting and a public hearing was held by the Board of Supervisors in June 2021.

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Henrico County Public Schools continues to seek public input and take such input into account when revising plans throughout the 2021-22 school year.

## Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Henrico 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, with the most recent review being completed by June 1, 2022, and Henrico 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

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

- The plan is posted at <https://henricoschools.us/backtoschool/>.
- The plan is available in Spanish and can be translated into additional languages (written and verbal) upon request. Please contact the Welcome Center, located at J.R. Tucker High School, at 804-527-4604 or Sarah Modrak at 804-527-4064 for translation assistance. Parents may also work directly with their school for translation needs related to school-specific information.
- Upon request, a parent or guardian with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format, by contacting Heather Allen, HCPS policy and constituency services liaison, at [mallen@henrico.k12.va.us](mailto:mallen@henrico.k12.va.us) or 804-652-3714.