

LEA Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

This document is intended to meet the federal statutory requirement that, within 30 days of receiving ARP ESSER LEA allocation (anticipated May 24th), an LEA shall publish an LEA Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services, which is often called a “school district reopening plan.”

Note, if an LEA developed a plan before *The American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA) was enacted on 03/11/2021 that complied with the federal statutory requirements for public posting and comments but does not meet all of the requirements below, then the LEA must revise its plan no later than six months after receiving ARP ESSER funds

For further context, please reference ARPA (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text>) or the Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf>).

I. General Information

1. LEA Name: Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
2. Date of Publication: Friday, June 11, 2021
Updated: Wednesday, January 12, 2022

II. Transparency and Accessibility

1. This plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services was published and made publicly available online here:
Description: <https://vlacs.org>

2. Before making the plan publicly available, the LEA sought public comment on the plan and took such comments into account in the development of the plan (please check one).
Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐
Description: As a 100% virtual school, we have been open throughout the pandemic and will not need to implement changes to the delivery of our services. We have made published our draft plan on our website and provided opportunities for public comments. Furthermore, we solicited comments via our parent newsletter, our student center, and from our employees.

3. The plan is in an understandable and uniform format (please check one): Yes: ☒
Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐
Description:

4. The plan, to the extent practicable, is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated (please check one):
Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐
Description:

5. The plan, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, is provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent (please check one):
Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐
Description:

III. Health and Safety

1. How the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff:

Description during SY20-21: We will continue to provide all of our services to students online. We anticipate that our support staff will return to our office in Exeter NH no earlier than September 1, 2021. Upon return to our offices in Exeter, we will follow the guidelines established by the CDC, NH Public Health, and local public health officials.

Description during SY21-22: We will continue to provide all of our services to students online. We will follow the guidelines established by the CDC and NH Public Health officials.

2. The LEA's adoption of the following CDC health and safety strategies are described below:
(Note federal regulation on this plan requires such reporting but does not require adoption of CDC safety recommendations. The NH DOE recognizes schools will implement localized safety measures based on the guidance provided by the CDC, NH Public Health, and local public health officials.)

- a. Universal and correct wearing of masks:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: All onsite staff members will be required to wear masks while working in our office until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

- b. Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding and modifying facilities):

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both Sys; All onsite staff members will be required to follow recommended physical distancing protocols while working in our office until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0319-new-evidence-classroom-physical-distance.html>

- c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: All onsite staff members will be required to follow recommended protocols for handwashing and respiratory etiquette when working in our office until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>

- d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: VLACS will follow recommended protocols for maintaining healthy facilities, including ventilation in our offices until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

- e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, and/or Tribal health departments:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: X Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: VLACS will follow recommended protocols for contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine in our offices until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>

f. Diagnostic and screening testing:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No:

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No:

Description of both SYs: VLACS will follow recommended protocols for diagnostic and screening testing in our offices until the CDC or NH Public Health Officials change the recommendations. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>

g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No:

Description of both Sys: VLACS will gather information from local health officials, local hospitals, and health clinics to educate its students and employees about vaccines and their availability. The school sends newsletter to employees and students to communicate information and availability of vaccines. Our administrative offices are located in Exeter, NH which limits our ability to provide vaccines to students throughout the state. Therefore, we will provide information to our students and employees regarding vaccines and their availability .

h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No:

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: No:

VLACS will support its educators to implement best practices and communicate with NH school districts, as needed, to provide services to students with disabilities in the school's virtual learning environment. Consistent with guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Education and the United States Department of Education, the school will continue to meet its obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.

i. Coordination with state and local health officials (please check one):

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both Sys: VLACS representatives will continue to attend training and policy implementation training sessions and to communicate with state and local health officials as required.

IV. Continuity of Services

1. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing student academic needs:

Description during SY20-21: As a 100% virtual school we have continued to provide students and families with high quality learning opportunities throughout the pandemic.

Description during SY21-22: As a 100% virtual school we will continue to provide students and families with high quality learning opportunities throughout the pandemic.

2. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing student social, emotional, mental, and other health needs, which may include student health and food services:
Description during SY20-21: As a 100% virtual school we have continued to provide students and families with high quality learning opportunities throughout the pandemic. Student health and food services are not provided by our school.

Description during SY21-22: As a 100% virtual school we will continue to provide students and families with high quality learning opportunities throughout the pandemic. Student health and food services are not provided by our school.

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3. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing staff social, emotional, mental, and other health needs:

Description during SY20-21: Our support staff and administrators are available to provide support to any employee. Given that we hire and train educators to be remote workers, our communication protocols, training, and supports are designed to assist a remote workforce.

Description during SY21-22: Our support staff and administrators are available to provide supports to any employee. Given that we hire and train educators to be remote workers, our communication protocols, training, and supports are designed to assist a remote workforce.

V. Plan Review

1. The LEA will meet the federal regulatory requirement to review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023 (the award period including the Tydings period).
2. Yes: X No: ☐

Description: _____

3. In doing so, the LEA will meet the federal statutory requirement to seek public input and take such input into account in determining whether to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

Yes: X No: ☐

Description: We have asked the employees who work in our office and will be impacted by this plan to provide feedback.

4. In doing so, the LEA will also meet the federal regulatory requirement to address CDC safety recommendations and, if the CDC has updated its safety recommendations at the time the LEA is revising its plan, each of the updated CDC safety recommendations.
(Note federal regulation on this plan requires such reporting but does not require adoption of CDC safety recommendations. The NH DOE recognizes schools will implement localized safety measures based on the guidance provided by the CDC, NH Public Health, and local public health officials.)

Yes: X No: ☐

Description: _____

VI. Authorization

LEA Superintendent's Signature:



Date:

January 31, 2022

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A. ARPA Statutory Excerpt

“(i) Safe return to in-person instruction.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this section shall develop and make publicly available on the local educational agency’s website, not later than 30 days after receiving the allocation of funds described in paragraph (d)(1), a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.

(2) COMMENT PERIOD.—Before making the plan described in paragraph (1) publicly available, the local educational agency shall seek public comment on the plan and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.

(3) PREVIOUS PLANS.—If a local educational agency has developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction before the date of enactment of this Act that meets the requirements described in paragraphs (1) and (2), such plan shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements under this subsection.”

Appendix B. Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER Excerpt

“(3) *LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services.*

(a) An LEA must describe in its plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services—

(i) how it 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 policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

(A) Universal and correct wearing of masks.

(B) Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (*e.g.*, use of cohorts/ podding).

(C) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

(D) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.

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

(F) Diagnostic and screening testing.

(G) Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.

(H) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.

(I) Coordination with State and local health officials.

(ii) how it will 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, which may include student health and food services.

(b) (i) During the period of the ARP ESSER award established in section 2001(a) of the ARP Act, an LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in person instruction and continuity of services.

(ii) In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account.

(iii) If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any such policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations.

(c) If an LEA developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i)(1) and (2) of the ARP Act but does not address all the requirements in paragraph (a), the LEA must, pursuant to paragraph (b), revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds to meet the requirements in paragraph (a).

(d) An LEA’s plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services must be—

(i) In an understandable and uniform format;

(ii) To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and

(iii) Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.”
