



# ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan Guidance & Template

**The Federal Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, declared under Section 319 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, expired at the end of the day on May 11, 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.

The ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education rules require Health and Safety plans include the following components:

1. How the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, implement prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;
2. How the LEA will 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;

3. 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:
  - 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 State and local health departments;
  - f. [Diagnostic](#) and screening testing;
  - g. Efforts to provide COVID-19 [vaccinations to school communities](#);
  - h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and
  - i. Coordination with state and local health officials.

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 Guidance](#)
- [PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Initial Effective Date:** January 17, 2023; replaces plan approved on July 19, 2022.

**Date of Revision:** January 16, 2023

**Date of Last Revision:** July 17, 2023

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 Octorara Area School District (OASD) implemented a health and safety plan during the 2020-2021 school year using mitigation strategies supported by the Center for Disease Controls, Pennsylvania Department of Health, CHOP Policy Lab, and the Chester County Health Department. These strategies were successful in supporting the larger public health initiative to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the school community, especially those at high risk for severe illness. Octorara also partnered with the Chester County Intermediate Unit to provide vaccination clinics to teachers and staff and shared information about vaccine clinics with families.

Octorara will continue to monitor the latest guidance from the Center for Disease Controls, Pennsylvania Department of Health, CHOP Policy Lab, and the Chester County Health Department. This information will help the district determine the effectiveness of its mitigation strategies. As required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Health and Safety Plan will be reviewed by the board of school directors every six months. The table found in subsequent pages describes the strategies, policies, and procedures the Octorara Area School District will employ during the 2023-2024 school year.

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?

July 17, 2023 Page 4 of 9

The Octorara Area School District resumed full in person learning for grades K-12 on Monday, August 30, 2021. Students wishing to attend school remotely were offered instruction through the Octorara Virtual Academy. Octorara's PDE approved emergency instructional time waiver included a combination of in person, synchronous remote, and

asynchronous remote to in order to meet the minimum 180 days of instruction and hour requirements at the elementary and secondary levels.

During the 2021-2022 school year the district employed 7 full-time counselors, 5 full time intervention specialists, and 6 reading specialists. Psychologist services were provided by independent contractors while the district search for a permanent employee. ESSER funds were encumbered to: create elementary acceleration and intervention classrooms to support student success, add a temporary reading specialist at Octorara Elementary School to provide interventions to students who were not reading at grade level, and continue the mathematics coach initiative at the secondary level, an action step in the Junior Senior High School's ATSI plan. To support math intervention and acceleration at the elementary level, teachers participated in job embedded professional development to support the implementation of the math workshop model. These initiatives will continue during the 22-23 school year. An additional ESSER funded ELA interventionist has been added at OIS to support struggling readers.

During the 21-22 school year, Octorara also used ESSER funds to contract with CCIU and Devereux Behavioral Health for mental health therapists, a social worker, and behavior coaches. These individuals shared intervention strategies to staff and provided individualized services to students in need of social, emotional, and mental health supports. A social work intern was provided by West Chester University. The district became a site for Nita M. Lowery 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program. This grant funded program provided afterschool programming to students in grades K-12. All of these initiatives will continue during the 22-23 school year.

Staff professional development, also paid for with ESSER funds, included refresher courses in Learning Focused Schools (LFS), with an emphasis on training the district's Professional Learning Community Leaders to implement the "Catching Kids Up Acceleration Strategies" model with all learners. Octorara continued to work with the Chester County Intermediate Unit to implement PBIS and MTSS, especially at the secondary level. These initiatives, with additional support from the National Center on Education and the Economy, will continue during the 22-23 school year. The district will also provide professional development in trauma informed instruction.

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**

<p>1. Universal and correct wearing of <a href="#">masks</a>:</p>	<p>Masks will be considered as a mitigation strategy, per school board approved Health and Safety Plan and most recent board action, based on recommendations from PDE, DOH, and/or CCHD.</p> <p>At this time, masking is optional across all settings in OASD.</p> <p>Octorara will provide masks or face shields to any staff member, student, or visitor as requested</p>
<p>2. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding) ;</p>	<p>School buildings and offices will allow for full occupancy.</p> <p>Octorara will consider additional recommendations and mitigation strategies from PDE, DOH, and CCHD, to the greatest extent practicable, as new information becomes available.</p>
<p>3. <a href="#">Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</a>:</p>	<p>Octorara will teach and reinforce frequent and proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette, including how to properly cover coughs and sneezes.</p> <p>Octorara will encourage hand washing: prior to meals and snacks, after meals and snack, transition back to class from being outside, after using the bathroom, and after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used.</p> <p>Octorara will have available hand sanitizer in classrooms and strategic locations of high traffic areas.</p> <p>Octorara will post signs in buildings reminding students, staff, and visitors of proper respiratory etiquette.</p>

<p>4. <a href="#">Cleaning</a> and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving <a href="#">ventilation</a>;</p>	<p>Octorara will continue to use COVID-19 specific EPA approved disinfectants.</p> <p>Octorara will continue to clean high touch surfaces as needed.</p> <p>When appropriate, classrooms, hallways, offices and common areas will be disinfected with a backpack sprayer with applicable disinfectant and/or electrostatic fogger.</p> <p>Devices and materials that must be shared should be cleaned between uses.</p> <p>The American Industrial Hygiene Association publication “Reducing the Risk of COVID-19 using Engineering Controls” indicates a relative risk reduction (in the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus) of 95% is achieved by establishing 6 air changes per hour (ACH). A relative risk reduction of 99% is achieved by 10 ACH.</p> <p>-Per ASHRAE HVAC, systems will continue to run as engineered having up to 15 cubic feet per minute (CFM) per occupant and up to 10 air changes per hour only at the direction of the facilities director. The district will ensure systems operate properly. Increased circulation of outdoor air by opening windows and doors may be permitted only at the direction of the facilities director.</p> <p>Indoor Air Quality parameters will be monitored to include temperature and relative humidity for appropriate thermal comfort conducive to a work environment as part of COVID-19 mitigation and general indoor environmental quality due diligence.</p>
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<p>5. <a href="#">Contact tracing</a> in combination with <a href="#">isolation</a> and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;</p>	<p>When required, Octorara will report all probable and confirmed cases of COVID-19 identified in school to the Chester County Health Department on the prescribed template for such incidents.</p> <p>When required, Octorara will provide to the health department a list of close contact(s) of individuals who were in contact with the COVID 19 positive individual while at school. -When required, Octorara will implement public health guidance on isolation and quarantine.</p> <p>Student, staff, or contractors, who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are identified as a probable case due to exposure outside of school, are encouraged to notify the school nurse immediately. Individuals will be referred to the Chester County Health Department for assistance.</p> <p>Individuals in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case due to exposure outside of school are encouraged to notify the school nurse immediately. Individuals will be referred to the Chester County Health Department for assistance.</p>
<p>6. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p>	<p>Octorara will encourage staff, students, visitors, and contractors to stay home when sick.</p> <p>Staff, students, and visitors shall be sent home if they become ill while on campus.</p> <p>Octorara will maintain adequate personal protective equipment for use when individuals become ill: gowns, N95, surgical, and KN95 masks, eye protection, gloves, etc.</p>
<p>7. Efforts to provide <a href="#">vaccinations to school communities</a>;</p>	<p>Octorara will provide information to families about vaccination clinics and/or how get a COVID-19 vaccine for their child or family member, as requested.</p> <p>Visitors, employees, and students will not be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19.</p> <p>Octorara will not inquire about the COVID-19 vaccination status of any visitor, employee, or student, unless such an inquiry is medically necessary as determined by the school district's physician and/or school nurse.</p>



<p>8. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety</p>	<p>Accommodations for students with disabilities will be addressed on an individual basis. IEP's and 504 plans will be modified as needed.</p>
<p>9. Coordination with state and local health officials.</p>	<p>Octorara will consult with state and local health departments as needed for COVID related concerns.</p> <p>Octorara will continue to monitor school and community transmission levels, positivity rates, and other metrics to determine prevention and mitigation protocols.</p> <p>Octorara will continue to coordinate response efforts through the Chester County Intermediate Unit.</p>

## Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for the Octorara Area School District reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

Yes - 8

No - 0

1 Absent

Affirmed on: July 17, 2023

By:



(Signature\* of Board President)

Samuel J. Ganow

(Print Name of Board President)

Jill A. Hardy, Board Secretary

\*Electronic signatures on this document are acceptable using one of the two methods detailed below.

**Option A:** The use of actual signatures is encouraged whenever possible. This method requires that the document be printed, signed, scanned, and then submitted.

**Option B:** If printing and scanning are not possible, add an electronic signature using the resident Microsoft Office product signature option, which is free to everyone, no installation or purchase needed.