

American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER III) Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Local Educational Agency Plan Template

Background on ESSER

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER, also known as ESSER III, funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Requirements (IFR) on April 22, 2021 requiring Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) receiving ESSER III funds to submit an LEA Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. If an LEA had already developed a plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the enactment of ARP that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i) but did not address all of the requirements in the IFR, the LEA must revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ESSER III funds. This applies even if an LEA has been operating full-time in-person instruction but does not apply to fully virtual schools and LEAs.

The IFR and ARP statute, along with other helpful resources, are located here:

- April 2021 IFR: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf>
- ARP Act text: <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 School Operation Guidance: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html#anchor_1616080023247
- ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume I: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf>
- ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume II: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>
- ESEA Evidence-Based Guidance: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/guidanceeusesinvestment.pdf>
- ED FAQs for ESSER and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER): https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf

Purpose of the Template

The IFR issued by ED outlines several requirements for all LEAs that receive ESSER III funds, including that LEAs have in place a plan for ensuring safety during in-person instruction (either in-progress or planned) as well as ensuring continuity of services should the LEA or one or more of its schools be required to close temporarily for COVID-19-related public health reasons in the future. LEAs who had a plan in place by March 11, 2021, which incorporated opportunity for public comment and was posted publicly have six months from the date their ESSER III Assurances were completed to update and revise the plans to meet those requirements. Examples of previous plans that may be allowable would be a completed Cal/OSHA or Assembly Bill 86 plan, as long as it meets the requirements previously stated. LEAs which did not have a statutorily compliant plan in place as of March 11, 2021, must create and post this plan within 30 days of completing their ESSER III Assurances.

If you have questions as to which category applies to your LEA, please contact EmergencyServices@cde.ca.gov. Plans are required for all LEAs, regardless of operating status, unless an LEA is fully virtual with no physical location. All plans must be reviewed, and, as appropriate, revised, at least every six months to incorporate new or revised CDC guidance and other changed factors.

This template has been created to assist LEAs in the creation of these plans and to ensure all required elements are met. The following requirements and assurances pertain to both the statutory requirements and the IFR published by ED. LEAs may provide any additional information they believe are helpful in assessing their plan. If you have any questions, please contact EmergencyServices@cde.ca.gov.

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

LEA Name:

Berkeley Unified School District

Option for ensuring safe in-person instruction and continuity of services:
has developed a plan

1. Please choose one:

- The LEA had a plan, as of March 11, 2021, that is already compliant with the ARP statute and will review and, as appropriate, revise it every six months to take into consideration the additional requirements of the IFR; or

NOTE: If your LEA already has a compliant plan as of March 11, 2021, and has assured such by checking the box above, then you may skip questions 2-4 and complete the Assurance and Contact sections.

- The LEA has amended/created a plan compliant with the IFR using this template and has posted/will post it within 30 days of completing the ESSER III Assurances.

NOTE: If checking the box above that you are using this template to meet the 30 day plan requirements, you must respond to each question in the template.

Please note whether the LEA has a compliant plan and include a link to the plan, or acknowledge that the LEA is submitting a new plan and will post it within 30 days of receiving funds.

<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BUSD-School-Reopening-Plan-V2-04.02.21.pdf>

2. The LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations, including: universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing; handwashing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and coordination with State and local health officials.

Describe how the LEA will maintain, or continue to maintain, health and safety policies and procedures. Include a description of any adopted policies and procedures regarding the CDC's safety recommendations (or available LEA website links to such policies). Include descriptions of appropriate accommodations adopted and coordination efforts conducted with outside State and local health officials. Please include or describe current public health conditions, applicable State and local rules and restrictions, and other contemporaneous information that informs your decision-making process.

On February 16, 2021, Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) and the Berkeley Federation of Teachers were able to reach an important agreement about vaccinations offered through the City of Berkeley. The agreement established a timeline for vaccinating all employees before reopening on March 29, 2021. The district and City of Berkeley were able to maintain this vaccination schedule, which established the following timeline for reopening our schools. A distance learning model was also provided for families who did not opt to send their children to school in person.

Monday, March 29:

-Reopen Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, and K-2

April 5-9:

-Spring Recess

Monday, April 12:

-Reopen Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8, U9 Program at Berkeley High, Berkeley Technology Academy, and Berkeley Independent Study

Monday, April 19:

-Reopen Grades 10-12

The health and safety of our students, families, and staff were top priorities for the District as we reopened our school campuses. Here is a list of the health and safety practices that are in place while students are on campus:

- Each family is required to confirm every day their child is on campus that their child is free of symptoms related to COVID-19 by completing a Health Screening Form. If a family answers “no” to all questions, their student can go to school. If they answer “yes” to any of the questions, their student must stay home and the family should contact the school office.
- Students who do not have completed forms are screened daily at school entrances.
- Face coverings are required for all children and staff at all times, with the exception of when students are eating and drinking. Students bring their own face covering, and the school has a supply of disposable face coverings.
- In some instances, school buses, classrooms, and other shared spaces on campus may be used by individuals who cannot tolerate face coverings or are sub-optimally masked due to medical exemptions. In those instances additional risk mitigation efforts are used on a case-by-case basis. This can include face shields with drapes, additional ventilation, and increased social distancing, as practicable.
- Hand sanitizer is available in each classroom and throughout the school. BUSD staff encourage children to wash their hands frequently.
- Students are asked to maintain social distancing throughout the school day, as practicable.
- To the extent practicable, each elementary school student is in no more than 2 stable groups, generally to include their class group and an after-school group. Staff take care to ensure that stable groups do not mix during the school day, including during recess, or in hallways. This effort can also include staggered arrival and dismissal schedules and one-way paths of travel in some instances.
- BUSD staff maximize outside time.
- Parents/caregivers are not permitted onto the school campus except for a limited number of COVID-19 safety roles, and drop-off and pick-up takes place at the curb.
- Playground structures are open for use, and students are asked to use hand sanitizer before and after playing, to wear face coverings, and to remain with their stable group.
- The use of shared items is minimized. Stable groups have dedicated sports equipment and any high-touch items are cleaned daily.

Our district created a Covid-19 Reopening Safety Plan with clear guidelines for reopening our schools. Berkeley Unified operates under the City of Berkeley Health Department (CBHD) who provided us with guidance on safely reopening our schools. Prior to reopening, CBHD conducted site walkthroughs in order to verify coherence to regulations. The safety plan, which is currently posted on our website - link below, includes information on health order guidance, face coverings; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); stable groups; physical distancing; entrance, egress, and movement in our schools; ventilation and outdoor space; healthy hygiene practice; cleaning and disinfecting; health screening for students and staff; identification and tracing of contacts; City of Berkeley response guide to suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases; triggers to switching to distance learning; return to school criteria; communications plan; staff training and family education; testing; and staff vaccinations.

Berkeley Safety Plan:

<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BUSD-School-Reopening-Plan-V2-04.02.21.pdf>

In addition to the safety plan, on our website we have school reopening readiness dashboards for elementary, middle and high schools. We also maintain a “COVID-19 Confirmed On-Site Case Dashboard,” which provides the

public a report of all confirmed COVID-19 cases among personnel and students physically present at district schools and facilities during their infectious period for COVID-19. The page also has information and resources for keeping students and families safe.

Campus Reopening Website Page:

<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/campus-reopening/>

The 2020-2021 school year has officially come to a close, but we are holding summer school for qualifying students in June and July. During these summer school sessions, we are continuing to follow health and safety guidelines according to our safety plan. We have posted on our website safety plans for each school that is open for summer school. The plans include symptom screening, student and staff testing, cases and contact tracing, face covering requirements, isolating and quarantining, health and hygiene protocols, ensuring proper ventilation, and other safety protocols followed during the Spring.

California is preparing to get back to normal. On June 15, capacity and distancing restrictions were lifted for most businesses and activities. If current trends and best practices continue, the next school year will begin with offering full in-person instruction to all students (full days, five days per week). Some staff, students, and families may continue to require accommodations. For families who may not be able to return to in-person school, we will offer an independent study option and possibly a smaller version of our distance learning program. We will send information out by early August with any updates we have at that point about masks or daily screenings, but we are currently planning for a full five days of in-person school.

3. The LEA 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 foodservices.

Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services in case isolation, quarantine, or future school closures are required, including how the LEA will meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners.

We know that because of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures we will need to be ready to respond to an increased need for academic and social emotional support for our students. We are also aware that our staff may have unique needs for mental health support as a result of the pandemic. Berkeley Unified School District is ready to respond in a variety of ways. As we plan for the next school year, we are increasing programs and services that will best meet the needs of our students in the following ways.

Knowing that each school is unique, we are offering "Restorative Restart" school grants to each of our elementary and secondary sites. Principals and their stakeholders have developed individual proposals for how they will spend their allotted funding. Plans include specific actions intended to mitigate the effects of the pandemic including increasing staffing of counselors, literacy coaches, math interventionists, and response to intervention (RTI) teachers. Sites are also using the funding to provide trauma informed training for staff and other professional development focused on responding to the needs of students due to the pandemic.

We will staff a full-time Coordination of School Based Services Teacher on Special Assignment (TSA) for TK-8th grades to provide support to sites in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and in using our social emotional curricula. At our high school we have a health center that offers individual & group counseling, crisis intervention, relationship counseling, family counseling, stress management, and depression supports. If a student needs to be quarantined or we experience school closures, the Berkeley High School Health Center offers students access to essential health services that accommodate this. Services are available through telehealth (over the phone) or in-person (limited).

Tutoring will be provided for an anticipated increase in need for academic support, and in order to accelerate growth. We will use contracted agencies as well as our own staff to offer tutoring before and after school and on weekends. During the summer we are offering Slingerland and Wilson reading intervention summer sessions and

offering small group intervention support to special education students. Staff training will be an important part of our recovery planning. We are holding professional development through Wilson Language Training to provide quality professional learning and ongoing support for educators to help their students become fluent, independent readers. Special Education and site RTI teachers and literacy coaches will all be offered this training, which includes materials. Other training being planned will focus on accelerating learning and social emotional learning.

We know also that with the pandemic came isolation. Students' opportunities to interact with each other, play, exercise, and explore through hands-on activities was lessened considerably. It is important that we account for the whole child in our planning as we add or fortify programs. To address this issue we will be funding enrichment activities beyond our normal before and after school learning offerings through contracted agencies. We are exploring possibilities such as STEM activities, sports programs, and programs in the arts. This pandemic has disrupted our students' and families' lives, but we must also take into consideration the mental health of our staff. During this dramatic shift from normalcy, they were called upon to step up to the challenge of taking on a whole new way of doing their jobs, often while caring for those in their homes. If staff, or their family member is having trouble coping, BUSD offers free and confidential services through Claremont Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a behavioral health partner recognized for providing innovative EAP, work/life, wellness and organizational assistance services, including financial and legal services and emotional well-being resources.

During the summer, BUSD will continue to distribute free grab and go breakfast and lunch meals to all children, age 18 and younger, to cover meals on weekdays, weekends, and most holidays. Summer meals will be distributed beginning June 7 and through August 11. In addition to distribution to students who are on campus for in-person summer learning, meal distribution for all youth not attending a BUSD summer program will continue to occur on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

As we return back to full in person instruction offered to all students, five days a week, we know there will be some students who will not be able to return due to medical circumstances. In response to this, BUSD is currently planning to offer 2 models for instruction:

Model 1 - Voluntary Independent Studies Program: For grades K-8, A Berkeley Independent Studies (BIS) teacher and home teacher collaborate together on assignments that will best support the student's progress. The main role of the BIS teacher/coach is to provide the curriculum to support the home teacher (parent/guardian) to teach and supervise instruction. The BIS teacher assesses student progress weekly. For grades 9-12, students meet with their teacher once-twice a week for 90 minutes for each class. Students take 3 classes a quarter. Students take home 30 hours of homework each week (10 hours /class).

Model 2 - BIS Virtual Academy offered for students with a "documented medical reason" and can't be vaccinated, or are at higher risk even after vaccination. The instructional schedule would be the same as our 2020-2021 distance learning schedule. We would most likely offer combination grade level classes, K-1, 2-3, 4-5.

For students who have a qualifying medical condition and receive Special Education services, the IEP team will convene to consider services during the student's registration before transfer to the BIS Virtual Academy. We will also take into consideration the needs of our English Learner (EL) students and ensure they are receiving services and supports online. We will not be able to offer Two-way Immersion to students currently in that program, nor will we be able to offer the full array of enrichment classes we previously offered in our distance learning model. Students will be allowed to move in to, or out of in-person or distance learning, but they will not be guaranteed a spot at their previous home school. Instead, they will be assigned to a site based on zones, and available space. If a class is quarantined, the teacher will move into a distance learning model as done during Spring of 2021. Because teachers now have the skills to teach in person or in distance, we anticipate much smoother transition if this is needed.

4. The LEA sought public comments in the development of its plan and took those comments into account in the development of its plan.

Describe the LEA's policy or practice that provided the public with an opportunity to provide comments and feedback and the collection process. Describe how any feedback was incorporated into the development of the plan.

BUSD families and Community are integral to the success of our students and schools. Families are active, engaged and welcomed partners in their child's education, they give valued input and participate in making important decisions about our academic and enrichment programs. Our diverse community is passionate about equitable educational outcomes for all students. Our civic and community organizations partner with us to promote family engagement and the well-being and success of our students. BUSD partners with this engaged and vocal community as decisions are made to guide the education of our students. Over this time of the pandemic, we held a variety of added public forums for stakeholders and provided regular updates to the school board on the status of school reopening. Town Hall and school reopening meetings are listed below. All meetings included an opportunity for families to ask questions either during the meeting, or by submitting questions prior. All meetings were recorded and available on our website afterwards. Information attained from meetings and surveys helped to guide us through this very difficult and unprecedented time, and gave stakeholders an opportunity to offer a wide array of perspectives.

November 19, 2020 Spanish Town Hall

November 19, 2020 Elementary School Town Hall

December 1, 2020 Middle School Town Hall

December 3, 2020 High Schools Town Hall

December 3, 2020 High Schools Student Town Hall

January 27, 2021 Superintendent's State of the District and Reopening Conversation

March 23, 2021 - BUSD Facilities and Covid Mitigation

April 1 BUSD Middle School and High School Town Hall for Special Education Families

April 1 BUSD Black and African American Town Hall for Middle School and High School Families

Information sessions with updates from the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Collaborative to advise on reopening schools safely (UCSF-CARES) were held throughout the school year. The UCSF webinars included information about data and best practices on risk mitigation in schools, issues related to health equity, and updates on vaccines. The meeting on April 20th was geared toward our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community, and one in Spanish on May 4. Attendees were allowed to ask questions of presenters, and sessions were recorded and available afterward on the BUSD YouTube channel.

- March 22, 2021 BUSD and UCSF COVID-19 and healthHealth Information Session
- April 20, 2021 BUSD and UCSF Covid Information Session (BIPOC)
- 4 de Mayo 2021 BUSD y UCSF Sesión de Información de Covid 19 Para la Familia

BUSD has offered a variety of surveys to families to gather information in order to inform decisions. One survey was offered at the beginning of the school year, 2020-2021, in order to understand how our families were thinking about plans for school in the Fall. This survey told us that parents needed better support with technology and needed a way to connect with their child's teacher and have a more collaborative approach to their child's learning. As a result, we offered time at the beginning of the school year for family meetings with teachers, we purchased the app, "Remind" for better communication, and we embedded time into the teachers' work week for family outreach. We surveyed families in October to solicit feedback on how distance learning was going for their child or children. The positive feedback from this survey let us know that the changes we made for the fall were successful. We surveyed families in February to find out how many would be willing to send their child back to in person learning, given all of the safety protocols that were being followed. This survey was vital for our reopening plans to inform us on how many families preferred to keep their child in distance learning. Knowing that approximately 18% of our families still favored distance learning helped us to plan for the number of teachers and classes we needed in order to offer this extra program of distance learning while running an in-person program simultaneously. We also conducted a final survey in May for distance learning families to better understand for

the 2021-2022 school year whether families still needed an alternative to in-person learning due to medical or personal issues. This survey is currently helping us to determine the scale of our Independent Studies and Distance Learning Programs for the fall. All surveys guided our decision making in some way throughout the school year.

In addition, the LEA provides the following assurances:

- The LEA has made (in the case of statutorily compliant plans) or will make (in the case of new plans) its plan publicly available no later than 30 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation.
 - o Please insert link to the plan:
<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BUSD-School-Reopening-Plan-V2-04.02.21.pdf>
- The LEA sought public comment in the development of its plan and took those public comments into account in the development of its plan.
- The LEA will periodically review and, as appropriate revise its plan, at least every six months.
- The LEA will seek public comment in determining whether to revise its plan and, if it determines revisions are necessary, on the revisions it makes to the plan.
- If the LEA revises its plan, it will ensure its revised plan addresses each of the aspects of safety currently recommended by the Centers for Disease Control(CDC), or if the CDC has revised its guidance, the updated safety recommendations at the time the LEA is revising its plan.
- The LEA has created its plan in an understandable and uniform format.
- The LEA's plan is, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parent scan understand, or if not practicable, orally translated.
- The LEA will, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provide the plan in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

The following person or persons is/are the appropriate contact person for any questions or concerns about the aforementioned plan.

Please list name(s), title(s), address, county, and contact information for the person or persons responsible for developing, submitting, and amending the LEA plan.

Rubén Aurelio, Associate Superintendent, 2020 Bonar Street, Berkeley, CA, Alameda County,
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