

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:

Meridian Elementary 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.

The LEA is submitting a new plan and will post it within 30 days of receiving funds.

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.

Meridian Elementary will continue to maintain appropriate health and safety policies and procedures related to preventing the spread of COVID-19. We are following all of the protocols for k-12 guidance for California Schools. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>

Here is the plan posted on our website. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RS5IsTNggcKX-nWaZpBE-WVZnBgRFpC0wrVZrWD8e_w/edit?usp=sharing

I have attendend Zoom meetings with Dr. Luu our Sutter County health official. I have met with the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools and other district superintendents in Sutter County in Zoom meetings discussing safety

guidelines.

COVID-19 cases in our area are on the rise. In accordance with the local health department requirements, students and staff are required to mask, employees are required to provide proof of vaccination or a weekly negative test, handwashing protocols and school disinfecting protocols are in place including disinfecting surfaces and fogging the school daily. In addition, the school is keeping students in classroom cohorts throughout the day and keeping students 6 feet apart when possible. Older students are eating lunch outside and younger students are socially distanced and limited to 15 minutes in the lunchroom. Families are notified when their student is exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID 19. All measures required by the health department for quarantine, modified quarantine, and isolation are followed. The health department is notified of any positive COVID case within the school and provides contact tracing information. We have purchased COVID-19 test kits to provide to families of students who are close contact. We also are referring our students to a local clinic who does COVID testing for families without insurance or on Medical. Junior high students are encouraged to vaccinate and have been provided information from the State Superintendent about vaccination.

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.

When a student is put in isolation or quarantine the teacher provides a short term independent study packet. Teachers are available through google classroom if students need additional help. Students with disabilities will be contacted by the resource teacher to try and schedule time in google classroom. If the student is ill, or does not have access to the internet then they will make up their minutes when they return from quarantine. In the event of a future school closure, students will receive daily synchronous and asynchronous instruction through google classroom. ELD students will continue to receive their designated ELD and integrated ELD instruction during synchronous and small group instruction held in google classroom. Students with special needs will still receive appropriate support through the resource teacher and their classroom teacher. Students with 504's will still receive the appropriate supports through their classroom teacher, synchronous instruction, and daily small group meetings in google classroom. In the event that students do not have access to the internet, (Our school is in the country and there are some places that hot spots will not work) we will work to find ways to provide synchronous instruction and daily check-ins through in school small group (if circumstances permit). or via telephone if no other options exist.

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.

We presented our COVID safety plan at a school board meeting. After the meeting, parents were notified through text and email that the plan was on the website and were encouraged to provide feedback. Teachers, students, and staff also had the opportunity to provide input on the development of the COVID safety plan through staff meetings and various conversations. However, the guidelines of the local health department and state provided the framework for the plan. While many parents disagreed with masking, vaccinations, and schoolwide COVID testing, masking was non-negotiable. We took public comment into consideration as long as it did not conflict with the state and local guidelines. The input received from parents was the importance of sanitizing, disinfecting classrooms, social distancing, and communicating with families when their child is a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

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:

COVID safety protocols:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RS5lsTNggcKX-nWaZpBE-WVZnBgRFpC0wrVZrWD8e_w/edit?usp=sharing

Covid Prevention Program:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KCeHr9yE6_SxUcoRU9l-qL4omD9JuxdK/edit?usp=sharing&rtpof=true&sd=true

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 can 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.

Tracey McPeters, Superintendent/Principal, Meridian Elementary, 15898 Central Street, Meridian CA, 95957, Sutter County, 530-696-2605