



On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education is providing an additional \$121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund). This legislation will award grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. The federal government requires that each LEA create a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*. There are five areas that NERSBA must consider when developing this plan: I) Health and Safety Strategies, II) Continuity of Services, III) Public Comment, IV) Periodic Review Process, V) Understandable and Uniform Format.

I. Health and Safety Strategies

NERSBA will follow the most current CDC guidance and the North Carolina DHHS guidance. In addition, NERSBA will follow protocols as listed in the *Lighting Our Way Forward: North Carolina's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools* and the *StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit*. This guidance is a living document; therefore, NERSBA's plan will be revised accordingly including any differentiation for vaccinated individuals.

At the start of the 2020-2021 school year, NERSBA committed to an instructional format that was practical and responsive to the needs of students and staff while adhering to the guidelines above. We were able to offer a staggered, in person option as well as a completely virtual option for students. On April 12, 2021, we transitioned to nearly all students being back on campus for full-time, in-person instruction (Monday – Thursday, Friday as a Virtual Instruction day).

For the 2021-2022 school year, NERSBA implemented a full return to in-person instruction while adhering to any ongoing local, state and federal requirements. The table below includes NERSBA's response to COVID mitigation strategies for that school year.

Universal and correct wearing of masks	NERSBA students, staff and any visitors on campus are required to wear masks when inside and on buses. Masks may be removed while eating lunch however students are expected to maintain 3 feet of physical distance between each other during this time.
Physical distancing	Social distancing of at least 3 feet will be maintained in all classrooms including during lunch. This protocol will be revised according to any updates made to the guidance documents mentioned earlier.
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Staff will continually review guidance and training on proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette with students. Frequent hand washing or sanitizing is expected and will be supported by

	appropriate signage and sanitizing stations at entrances and in classrooms.
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities	NERSBA will be cleaned and sanitized according to procedures outlined on custodial schedule. Whole room sanitization (Clorox machine) will take place weekly. Air purifying machines will be available for classrooms and ventilation will be encouraged where possible.
Contact tracing and isolation/quarantine	Contact tracing will be conducted in cooperation with the Martin Tyrrell Washington Health Department. Appropriate school staff will notify affected parents and students.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to staff and eligible students	NERSBA will serve as a location for vaccination clinics and will publicize other vaccination clinics.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	NERSBA will continue to maintain health and safety protocols and policies to support the individual needs of students and staff.

For this school year (2022-23), NERSBA continued with full in-person instruction while adhering to any ongoing local, state and federal requirements. The table below includes NERSBA's response to COVID mitigation strategies for this school year.

Universal and correct wearing of masks	NERSBA students, staff and any visitors on campus have the option to wear masks when inside and on buses.
Physical distancing	Social distancing of at least 3 feet is recommended, but not required.
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Staff and students are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands regularly. Hand sanitizer is available in classrooms and throughout the school.
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities	NERSBA will be cleaned and sanitized according to procedures outlined on custodial schedule. Whole room sanitization (Clorox machine) will take place as needed. Air purifiers have been added to all HVAC systems.
Contact tracing and isolation/quarantine	Contact tracing will be conducted in cooperation with the Martin-Tyrrell-Washington Health Department upon request or if CDC Guidelines require it.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to staff and eligible students	NERSBA will continue to serve as a location for vaccination clinics if needed.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	NERSBA will continue to maintain health and safety protocols and policies to support the individual needs of students and staff.
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II. Continuity of Services

Beginning in August 2021, NERSBA implemented in-person learning. Student learning continues to be supported with:

- Social emotional resources and counseling support
- Identification of student needs for grade-appropriate skills and acceleration of instruction including additional tutoring as needed
- Collaborative work to align instruction to support student learning needs

III. Public Comment

The public has continual opportunities to provide input and comment on the Safe Return to School Plan and all updates through live comment at Board of Directors meetings, email or in writing. The plan is publicly available on the NERSBA website.

IV. Periodic Review Process

NERSBA is required to periodically review and revise, if needed, the Safe Return to School Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2024. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after considering the public comment.

V. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format to the extent practical and it written in a language that parents can understand or be orally translated. Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, the Plan will be provided to the parent in an alternative format. NERSBA will ensure the Plan is accessible on the school's website which support accessibility standards. Posted PDFs are opened in Adobe Acrobat.