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Howe Public Schools

American Rescue Plan Act ESSER III Fund

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

Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

This plan describes how Howe Public Schools (HPS) will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Scott Parks, Superintendent of Howe Schools, at 918-658-3666.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Howe Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school staff during the 2023-2024 school year. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

The goal of Howe Public Schools is to provide a healthy school environment to foster greater academic achievement and healthier lives for students and staff.

Before any students could return to school in person, each school was required to submit a health plan to the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). The HPS plan outlines the school plans for student and staff health monitoring; communication plan with staff, students and families; preparation of student health services; promoting behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19; hygiene practices; protecting vulnerable individuals and preparing for when someone gets sick. Howe Public Schools submitted its health plan to the OSDE July 2020.

The HPS health plan addresses daily health screenings, physical distancing on buses and in classrooms, social distancing; cleaning and disinfecting, the recommended use of face coverings; and restricts mixing groups of students, large gatherings and the use of communal spaces (cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums). This original plan was reviewed

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by the consultation committee and provided as part of the public input at the June 2021 school board meeting and reviewed again at the July 2022 and June 2023 school board meetings. The following is a summary of our plans to return to the 2023-2024 school year.

Daily Health Screenings

HPS implemented daily COVID-19 screenings for all students, staff and visitors to be completed prior to entry to its buildings last school year and will encourage this to be continued by students and staff when community COVID levels indicate a need:

- _____ 1. Does your child/ Do you have a temperature of 100 degrees or more today?
- _____ 2. Does your child / Do you have a sore throat not consistent with known allergies?
- _____ 3. Does your child / Do you have a non productive cough or cough that is abnormal for you or your child?
- _____ 4. Does your child / Do you have a loss of smell or taste?
- _____ 5. Does your child / Do you have shortness of breath?
- _____ 6. Does your child / Do you have close contact with a positive COVID case?

HPS will change this screening to a requirement if we return to the Orange Level 2 status based on the State-wide County Color Code System. Masks will be recommended for all staff, visitors, and students if our County is placed under a Governor order of emergency and the local Department of Health guidance requires the use of masks. Physical distancing of 3 feet is encouraged in all classrooms and on the school bus. Students eat in the Cafeteria on a schedule to avoid any necessary contact with other student groups. Cleaning and disinfecting are provided throughout the day by custodial staff and air/room sanitation systems are available as needed. Covid-19 testing is provided by HPS Nursing Staff and the school nurse in collaboration with the LeFlore County Health Department and the Choctaw Nation if available to provide for any necessary communications and testing.

HPS Mitigation Strategies

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In addition, Howe Public Schools has adopted procedures on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- *Universal and correct wearing of masks*
HPS will follow the State-wide County Color Code system in the coming year with recommended procedures for home Covid health checks when LeFlore County is in Green or Yellow status. The district will shift to a recommended mask wearing for all students, staff and visitors during Orange Level 1 County status. All students, staff and visitors are recommended to wear masks while on school grounds when the Governor declares an emergency for our County and the local Department of Health guidance requires the use of masks. HPS staff will provide monitoring of the color code system, State and Local orders, and notify all students, parents and staff through our communication portals and provide written notice at all entrances.
- *Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)*
Desks in classrooms were reconfigured to allow for 3 foot social distancing as much as possible as indicated for elementary and secondary grade levels. Elementary students remain within their cohorts throughout the day.
- *Handwashing and respiratory etiquette*
Wellness stations are available in all classrooms which include hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes. Adult and child disposable masks will be provided if the color code system levels reach Orange Level 2 and the district shifts to recommended mask wearing. Coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, proper disposal of used tissues and proper handwashing are stressed to students and staff. Posters and signage are used throughout all school buildings.
- *Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation*
Increased cleaning and disinfection is conducted by custodial staff, and air purification systems are available to all classrooms and buildings where the HVAC systems do not meet current ASHRAE standards.
- *Covid testing in combination with isolation and quarantine, and working with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments*
HPS Health Services Staff, Athletic Staff and Administrative are trained in testing referrals. HPS administration and nurse collaborates with the LeFlore County Health Department and if available the Choctaw Nation to identify and isolate or quarantine those students and staff who have tested positive for COVID- 19 or recommend quarantine for those who were a close contact of a person with COVID-19. HPS follows the LeFlore County Health Departments process for COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure.

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- *Diagnostic and screening testing*
HPS developed the capacity for testing during the 2020-21 school year and will continue to work with the State in the coming year for testing of Staff, and with parental permission, students.
- *Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities*
HPS nursing staff and the LeFlore County Health Department provided the opportunity for vaccinations and care to staff members at participating community vaccination clinics. In collaboration with the Choctaw Nation and the LeFlore County Health Department, HPS is working to provide access to vaccination clinics for students age 13 and above.
- *Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies*
Children with disabilities who are unable to wear a mask do not have to do so. Care for these students if Orange Level 2 is reached will continue in the classroom as needed.
- *Coordination with state and local health officials*
HPS collaborates with the LeFlore County Health Department and the Choctaw Nation which works directly with the Oklahoma Department of Health and the CDC for our COVID-19 guidance.

Continuity of Services

Howe Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to 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.

HPS provided in-person instruction this past year and will continue to provide this option in the coming year and modify this service based on the needs identified in our district and/or the County reaching Red Level status on the State-wide color code system. The HPS District will continue to provide options for virtual and blended learning for students based on meeting certain requirements as provided by each school office. Families should inquire with their building principal to express interest in virtual or blended learning and determine eligibility for their child(ren).

Academics

Howe Public Schools utilizes K-12 Diagnostic Tools to identify learning gaps in core academic areas. The plan includes targeting students reading below grade level to receive specific instruction by reading interventionists and teachers in the school day

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and through after school tutoring. Students with disabilities and English Learners have also been selected for additional support during and after school hours.

In addition, HPS has identified students for an intensive 5-week summer program in mathematics and reading instruction in grades K-4 funded through the Choctaw Nation POSSE Program. Students were selected for the program based on diagnostic data provided through NWEA (MAPS) and STAR assessments. Students who are working below grade level and identified were invited to participate in the HPS/Choctaw Nation POSSE summer program.

For fall of 2023, the following plans are being implemented to build teacher capacity and close achievement gaps:

- Review/Revision of the K-12 curriculum to include priority standards and alignment to the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS)
- Implementation of the HPS Instructional Framework and the Professional Learning Strategic Plan
- Implementation of K12 Reading and Mathematics Diagnostic Tools (same diagnostic for all grade levels) NWEA (MAPS)
- Utilization of a blended learning instructional model across the school to support personalization of student learning and provide needed supports to students who are working below grade level
- Implementation of the K-12 Literacy Plan including, but not limited to, the expansion of reading selections in the media center with a focus on diverse authors and subjects, increased content area reading books for classrooms, and an eBook Library.
- Instructional coaching for teachers and administrators across the district
- Continued LETRS training for all K-2 teachers
- Implementation of the HPS Virtual/Blended Learning Initiatives to support identified students
- Continued integration of the HPS Social Emotional Learning curriculum embedded into content and provided through the Elementary and High School Behavioral Counselors
- Continue Behavioral Counselors to support students in both schools,
- HPS employs a full-time College and Career Specialist to prepare students for graduation, college, work (internships), and military.
- The Behavioral Counselors focus on family engagement and work with students and their families to increase family engagement, support student attendance, and promote academic success. Funds from ESSER will be utilized to support the program.

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- While HPS continues to review the need for extended day programs, academic tutors, and various partnership programs for after-school academic support, the philosophy of HPS is to utilize ESSER funds to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students during the school day. Increasing professional learning to strengthen instruction while providing specific targeted resources for struggling students continues to be the priority for HPS.

Student Meal Service

Traditional Learners

Meal service has continued for all students attending traditional school. Menus are available [online](#). *Elementary School Hybrid In-Person Learning*

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided in the cafeteria based on the schedule provided to limit students' access to other student groups.

Virtual Learners

For students that are attending school virtually, parents can pick up meals daily. Locations can be found by visiting www.nnschools.org/cns.

Student Transportation

Howe Public Schools provides bus transportation for students to and from school in each County color code phase with the exception of Red status.

Physical Distancing

To assist with physical distancing, buses are only able to transport approximately 45 students at a time. Students are given assigned seats to assist with virus mitigation. Siblings residing in the same household may be seated together on the same seat. Younger students are seated towards the front of the bus if possible.

Face Masks

Students, bus drivers and bus assistants are encouraged to wear masks on the bus when we are under a Governor order of emergency and the local Health Department guidance requires the use of masks. The district will provide notification via the school webpage, social media page and notification system. Drivers have a limited supply of disposable masks for students who attempt to board a bus without a mask when required and will provide one as long as it is not a recurring need. Students who

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continue to board the school bus without a mask will be referred to school administration.

Cleaning

All buses are periodically cleaned and sanitized following each route. Drivers are required to spray all high-touch surfaces and seats after students get off the school bus. A team of trained transportation employees conduct a thorough disinfection process on all buses weekly.

Routes and Bus Stops

As students return to school, bus routes ensure students have transportation to and from school. HPS encourages all families to continue daily Covid-19 screenings as were required last year:

- _____ 1. Does your child/ Do you have a temperature of 100 degrees or more today?
- _____ 2. Does your child / Do you have a sore throat not consistent with known allergies?
- _____ 3. Does your child / Do you have a non productive cough or cough that is abnormal for you or your child?
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Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Howe Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

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Howe Public Schools' Return to Learn plan was developed in collaboration with staff, students, families and community partners. During the development of the plan, students, families and staff provided input at a meeting conducted June 15, 2021.

In addition, Howe Public Schools provided for public input at the regular school board meeting June 14, 2021 prior to final consultation on the 15th. This plan was reviewed again on 12/21/2021, 7/11/2022, 6/12/2023.

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2024), Howe Public Schools will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and Howe Public Schools will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

The Plan is Available to the Public

Howe Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted online at www.howeschools.org
- Howe Public Schools offers language interpreting services to all families who speak a language other than English. The plan will be available in Spanish and posted to the HPS website. The plan will be made available in other languages upon request by calling the administration office at (918) 658-3666.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Individuals may contact the administration office to request translation at (918) 658-3666; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting the HPS Special Education Department at (918) 658-3666.

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