

La Vernia Independent School District 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 La Vernia Independent School District (LVISD) will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and department staff as we return to school in the fall of 2023. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Helen Whisenhunt, Chief Instructional Officer, at (830) 779-6600.

Maintaining Health and Safety

LVISD has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and department staff as we return to in-person instruction for the 2023-2024 school year. The goal of La Vernia ISD is to provide a healthy school environment to foster greater academic achievement and healthier lives for students and staff.

A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is listed below and includes 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.

LVISD Mitigation Strategies

La Vernia ISD has adopted procedures on each of the following based on safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Region 8 Local Health Authority. See [CDC Guidance](#).

Strategies for Everyday Operations

LVISD acknowledges CDC's *recommendation*, " Though this guidance is written for COVID-19 prevention, many of the layered prevention strategies described in this guidance can help prevent the spread of other infectious diseases, such as influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and norovirus, and support healthy learning environments for all." TEA has not released an updated guidance on quarantine since CDC updated 8/11/2022.

- *Staying Up to Date on Vaccinations*

Per CDC, “Schools, ECE programs, and health departments should promote equitable access to vaccination. Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect eligible people from getting severely ill with COVID-19.”

La Vernia ISD will continue to encourage evidence based recommendations on vaccinations; when feasible, host vaccination clinics for staff through an approved partnership.

- *Staying Home When Sick*

States CDC, “People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin”

La Vernia ISD encourages staying home when sick, thus lowering the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, to other people.

- *Ventilation Systems*

Per CDC, “Schools and ECE programs can optimize ventilation and improve indoor air quality to reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air.”

La Vernia ISD has implemented deionization of the HVAC systems. This UV lighting is used to kill DNA of germs, viruses, mold spores, bacteria and fungi as they pass through the air handler system.

- *Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette*

CDC recommends the following, “Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Schools and ECE programs should teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. Schools and ECE programs should monitor and reinforce these behaviors, especially during key times in the day (for example, before and after eating and after recess) and should also provide adequate hand washing supplies, including soap and water. If washing hands is not possible, schools and ECE programs should provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.” CDC goes on to state, “Schools and ECE programs should teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.”

LVISD’s Handwashing and respiratory etiquette include the following:

- Reinforcing proper and frequent handwashing, especially during key times of the school day.
- Wellness supplies are available for classrooms which include hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and anti-bacterial hand soap.
- 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 Disinfecting*

CDC recommends, “Schools and ECE programs should clean surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces.”

La Vernia ISD has implemented the following:

- Cleaning and disinfection are conducted by custodial staff regularly.
- Classrooms and restrooms will be disinfected regularly.
- High-touch surfaces and areas will be disinfected throughout the day.
- Disinfectant spray will be provided in each classroom.
- Campuses will provide rapid disinfection with electrostatic applicators when available..

COVID-19 Community Levels and Associated Prevention Strategies

LVISD acknowledges CDC’s fluid continuum statement that “School and ECE program administrators should work with local health officials to consider other local conditions and factors when deciding to implement prevention strategies.” However CDC states, “When the COVID-19 hospital admission level indicates an increase, particularly if the level is high or the school or ECE program is experiencing an outbreak, schools or ECE programs should consider adding layered prevention strategies, described below, to maintain safe, in-person learning and keep ECE programs safely open.” Continuing CDC says “When the COVID-19 hospital admission level moves to a lower category or after resolution of an outbreak, schools and ECE programs can consider removing prevention strategies one at a time, followed by close monitoring of COVID-19 transmission within the school or ECE and the COVID-19 hospital admission level of their community in the weeks that follow.” TEA has not released an updated guidance on quarantine since CDC updated 8/11/2022.

- *Masks*

Per GA-38, school systems (La Vernia ISD) cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. GA-38 addresses government-mandated face coverings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other authority to require protective equipment, including masks, in an employment setting is not necessarily affected by GA-38.

La Vernia ISD shall allow individuals to wear a mask if they choose to do so. Masks are strongly recommended.

- *Cohorting*

CDC Removed the recommendation to cohort on August 11th, 2022.

LVISD will follow the update guidance from the CDC removing cohorting.

- *COVID Screen testing*

CDC no longer recommends routine screening testing in K-12 schools.

LVISD is not participating in testing.

- *Case Investigation and Contact Tracing*

CDC says that “Although universal case investigation and contact tracing are not routinely recommended for health departments as part of COVID-19 response. Schools and ECE programs that are not conducting contact tracing should use other methods to inform people who might have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the school environment of their potential exposure and the actions they should take to remain safe and reduce transmission.” TEA says “While school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 case investigations, local public

health entities have authority to investigate cases and are currently engaged in cooperative efforts on that front. Participation by individuals in these investigations remains voluntary. If school systems are made aware that a student is a close contact, the school system must notify the student's parents."

LVISD does not conduct contact tracing. TEA has not released an updated guidance on quarantine since CDC updated 8/11/2022.

- *Quarantine-*

- Management- CDC's August 11th, 2022, Public Health Guidance says "Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19 except in certain high-risk congregate settings such as correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and nursing homes. In schools and ECE settings, which are generally not considered high-risk congregate settings, people who were exposed to COVID-19 should follow recommendations to wear a well-fitting mask and get tested."

LVISD follows the above recommended CDC Public Health Guidance on quarantine released August 11th, 2022. TEA has not released an updated guidance on quarantine since CDC updated 8/11/2022.

- *Isolation*

- TEA's Public Health Guidance dated August 01, 2022 says " As provided in this Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule, school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who have or are suspected of having COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. As noted in the rule, exclusion shall continue until the conditions for re-entry are met: • For children with symptoms, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free, and other symptoms have improved. • Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested."
- CDC's guidance of Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19 dated May 11th 2023, concludes the following, people with Symptoms- Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset, regardless of when you tested positive. Day 1 is the first full day after the day your symptoms started. If you test positive for COVID-19, stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home. If Your symptoms are improving You may end isolation after day 5 if: You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). If your symptoms are not improving, continue to isolate until: You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving or you isolate through day 10. No Symptoms- Day 0 is the day you were tested (not the day you received your positive test result). Day 1 is the first full day following the day you were tested. If you develop symptoms within 10 days of when you were tested, the clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset. If you have no symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5.

LVISD follows TEA's August 01, 2022 Public Health Guidance for COVID-19 positives.

LVISD COVID-19 Reporting

- *Coordination with state and local health officials*
 - TEA says 8/1/2022, “If an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

LVISD does report and notify per TEA August 01, 2022 Public Health Guidance for COVID-19 positive cases, if determined while on campus .

Continuity of Services

La Vernia ISD 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.

Academics

Summer 2023

La Vernia ISD offered an extensive summer school program including:

- Extend School Year (ESY) for students who qualified through the ARD process
- Emergent Bilingual Summer Jump Start- (unable to secure enough students for summer 2023- did not make)
- End of Course Exam Preparation
- Credit Recovery- Grades 9-12. Instruction to assist students in grades 9-12 to recover academic credits for courses the student has failed.
- Accelerated Instruction - offered to students in grades 3-11 who qualify for focused instructional support connected to HB4545.

Fall 2023

La Vernia ISD is currently utilizing Spring 2023 STAAR scores in all subject areas along with K-8 Diagnostic Tools (when applicable) to identify learning gaps in core subject areas. Any student in grades 3-12 who did not pass a STAAR or EOC test will be required to attend between 15 and 30 hours of accelerated learning per subject area failed over summer of 2023 or the subsequent academic year. (HB 4545)

Further, any student in grades 3, 5 or 8 who fail STAAR Reading and/or Math for two consecutive years will be assigned an Accelerated Learning Committee to create an individualized plan for each student to target their specific needs. (HB 4545)

Other strategies being used to build teacher capacity and close the achievement gaps are:

- Continued review and revision of the LVISD Frameworks in response to needs identified in student data.
- Implementation of an LVISD Professional Learning Plan.
- Frequent review of student data to make informed instructional decisions.
- Use high-impact, aligned instructional resources.
- Utilization of a blended learning instructional model across the school division to support personalization of student learning and provide needed Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to students who are working below grade level
- Creation and Implementation of the K-12 Literacy Plan including, but not limited to, the expansion of reading selections in all media centers, and increased content area reading books for classrooms.
- Texas Reading Academies for all K-3 teachers and administrators.
- Implementation of high yield literacy and writing strategies.
- Continued integration of Social Emotional Learning curriculum embedded into content lessons.

- College, Career, and/or Military Readiness (CCMR) Coordinator and counselor will continue to provide information and assistance for students to easily transition from high school to their postsecondary opportunity of choice.
- Increase family engagement opportunities across the school district to increase stakeholder engagement, support student attendance, and promote academic success.

LVISD will work to offer opportunities before and after school, within the school day for students who may need that option to participate in accelerated learning. LVISD hopes to utilize ESSER funds to ensure we are meeting the needs of all learners as well as providing professional learning to strengthen Tier 1 instruction while providing specific targeted resources for Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Student Meal Service

Meal service will continue for all LVISD students who wish to participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs. Information about our Child Nutrition services are available online [here](#).

Students will be allowed to eat in common spaces at all campuses (such as the school cafeteria), however, additional spaces will be provided for students to eat meals, allowing for social distancing when allowable.

Student Transportation

La Vernia ISD provides bus transportation for students to and from school in compliance with TEA guidelines.

Masks will no longer be required for staff or students, but may be worn in accordance to personal preference. Physical distancing of 3-6 feet is used on the school bus when possible.

- *School buses*
Increased cleaning and sanitizing of school buses will be conducted by transportation staff.

Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, La Vernia ISD sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

- La Vernia ISD leadership shared information with stakeholders regarding ESSER and other Federal Funding during the May 2021 District Educational Excellence Council.
- La Vernia ISD collected feedback from district leaders (May 21st - June 4th) regarding needs connected to learning loss or continuity of services related to Covid-19.
- La Vernia ISD collected feedback from the community through an electronic survey (available in both English and Spanish) to gain information from stakeholders regarding what they felt to be most important connected to learning loss or continuity of services related to Covid-19. The survey was open from June 23rd - July 8th, 2021.

- La Vernia ISD shared a draft plan with stakeholders prior to submission in egrants for final feedback.
- La Vernia ISD continues to share ESSER III expenditure updates with the District Educational Excellence Council each fall and spring to ensure stakeholders are aware of grant expenditures.
- La Vernia ISD keeps updated ESSER III expenditure information on the district website at the following web address:

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), La Vernia ISD 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 La Vernia ISD 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

La Vernia ISD has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted online at: www.lvisd.org
- 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 LVISD Special Education Department at (830) 779-6600.
- La Vernia ISD will post the plan summary on the district website in both English and Spanish. Stakeholders who wish to receive this information in a language other than English or Spanish may contact the La Vernia ISD district office for assistance. (830) 779-6600.

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, August 5). *Appendices*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2022, May 27). *Guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2022, March 30). *Quarantine and Isolation*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#iso>
- Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). (2021, July 30). *COVID-19 School Readmission Criteria*. <https://dshs.texas.gov/covid19readmission/>
- Texas Education Agency (TEA). (2022, January 7). *Public Health Guidance*
<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>

