

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:

Walden Academy Charter School

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.

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.

Maintaining Health and Safety:

A. Handwashing:

1. Staff and students will be taught proper hand washing techniques of 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly, rinsing completely, and drying with a paper towel. Staff will model this for students, monitor, and reinforce on a daily basis.
2. Three additional hand washing stations have been installed in the front and rear of the campus consisting of two sinks each separated by a shield, and will be clearly marked to support more frequent hand washing and to minimize congregating in bathrooms.

B. Hand Sanitizing:

1. Staff and students will be taught proper hand sanitizing techniques of rubbing sanitizer into hands until completely dry.
2. Sanitizing stations will be clearly marked around campus inside and out for easy and frequent access.
3. When practicable, sanitizer will be 70%+ ethyl alcohol-based and fragrance-free.
4. Young children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to ensure proper and safe use.
5. Hand washing is preferred over hand sanitizing.

C. Face coverings must be used in accordance with CDPH guidelines, particularly indoor environments and in areas where physical distancing alone is not sufficient to prevent disease transmission.

1. All students and staff members will be required to wear a mask when inside at all times.
2. A parent of a student with a medical condition who is requesting their child not to wear a mask must provide a note from the student's physician with a specific reason. The district will review such a request and a decision will be made.
3. If a student or staff member forgets their mask, one will be provided to them for the day.
4. Anyone entering the school must wear a mask.
5. Students and staff will be instructed how to correctly use a mask and proper removal and disposal of mask.

D. Physical Distancing:

1. Students and staff must remain socially-distanced to the greatest extent possible.
2. Students and staff will be required to wear a mask when indoors.
3. Signage posted to remind people to maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
4. Respectful isolation of anyone who is symptomatic or has a temperature of 100.4 or higher. Students and staff with temperatures of 100.4 or higher will be sent home.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation:

A. Cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be approved for use against Covid-19 as listed on the Environmental Protection Agency(EPA) approved List. The product will be used according to label instructions and will be followed with proper use of PPE.

B. Areas will be cleaned and disinfected by trained staff members include but are not limited to:

1. Frequently touched indoor surfaces after use and throughout the day and/or when students are outside at recess or on a break.
2. Frequently touched outdoor surfaces such as doors, door handles, railings and bathrooms multiple times a day.
3. Hand washing stations disinfected at the end of the day.
4. All areas thoroughly cleaned and sanitized at the end of the day.

C. Each classroom will have a supply of appropriate cleaning and disinfecting supplies kept out of reach of students.

D. PE and recess equipment will be assigned to each classroom.

E. Ventilation will be maximized in classrooms, office, and staff room to the extent possible by opening windows and doors where practicable.

F. Each classroom contains:

1. separate air purifiers
2. separate HVAC system with filters changed regularly

G. Hand sanitizers will be replenished daily.

Check for Signs and Symptoms:

A. Student and family confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

B. At no time will students, staff or families will be treated with discrimination due to a diagnosed COVID-19 case or who are perceived to be a COVID-19 risk.

C. All staff and students exhibiting any of the following symptoms within the preceding 24 hours, or being in close contact with a person with COVID-19, need to contact the school immediately and stay

at home:

1. Fever present or within 24 hours
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
4. Fatigue
5. Muscle or body aches
6. Headaches
7. Sore throat
8. Congestion or runny nose
9. Recent loss of smell or taste
10. Diarrhea

D. Student and staff attendance will not be penalized for absences due to the above.

E. Staff will self-screen daily.

F. Parents will screen their child before the school day begins and report on school supported app or student will be screened when entering school.

G. Walden Academy will follow all Glenn County Public Health and Glenn County Board of Education guidelines when a staff member or student is diagnosed with, or exposed to, Covid-19.

F. All students and staff will be monitored for signs of illness throughout the day.

Plans When an Unvaccinated Staff Member or Student Becomes Sick: Due to changing information, school nurse and/or local public health office will be contacted to ensure most up to date guidance is followed.

A. A student exhibiting any of the above COVID-19 symptoms will wear a mask while waiting in a room designated as the isolation room until the student can get a ride home.

B. Staff will be asked to go home or to a healthcare facility immediately.

C. If a student or staff member comes in close contact (within 6 feet for over 15 minutes) with a person who is positive for COVID-19, they will notify the office manager or school director confidentially, and sent home to quarantine and be tested for COVID-19.

D. An area used by an individual suspected of being infected with the COVID-19 virus will be closed off. After 24 hours it will be cleaned and disinfected.

Plans When a Vaccinated Staff Member Becomes Ill:

A. Staff member may be provided a rapid test at school. If negative and symptoms are mild, staff member may stay at work and remain masked.

Quarantine Recommendations-Walden Academy follows all CDPH guidance.

A. Unvaccinated persons:

1. With COVID like symptoms-Student/staff goes home, recommend testing, return when symptoms resolve.
2. Exposure to COVID-19 positive person, within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes. Isolate for 10 days from date of last exposure, return on 11th day if symptom free, or get tested on 6th day after exposure. If negative, return on 8th day.
3. COVID positive: Isolate for 10 days. Return when symptom free and fever free for 24 hours.
4. If students was exposed at school, the students may be on a modified quarantine as described by CDPH.

B. Previously infected person:

1. COVID like symptoms-see A.1. above.

C. Vaccinated persons:

1. With COVID like symptoms-Student/staff may test at school. If negative, they may remain at school masked.
2. COVID positive and asymptomatic-Isolate for 10 days.
3. COVID positive with symptoms-Isolate for 10 days and return when symptom free and fever free for 24 hours.

Contact Tracing:

A. Contact tracing will be done in coordination with Glenn County Public Health:

1. Upon confirmation of a COVID diagnosis, the district will work with the student/staff/family to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they may have been infectious. For COVID-19, a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient is isolated.
2. We will follow quarantine recommendations as outlined above.
3. CDC cleaning protocols will be implemented. Any quarantine or school closure will be determined in concert with the Glenn County Department of Public Health.

Vaccinations/Testing Protocol:

- A. Staff are encouraged to get a vaccination.
- B. Staff members that decline a vaccination will be tested following California regulations.

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.

A. Walden Academy's goal is to continue to provide what is best for our students: in-person learning that addresses their academic, social, emotional, and mental health via the many programs in place within our school.

B. We believe prolonged periods of remote or virtual learning can have negative effects on the educational progress of our students. Academic gains can potentially be slowed or even reversed. Students without the resources of home support, English learners, and students with disabilities may experience learning loss due to fewer learning supports outside of school.

C. Safe, in-person school can offset the above negative impacts of long-term virtual learning.

D. If COVID cases rise significantly and we are required to close school, we will implement services as we did in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years:

A. Above and beyond regular academic synchronous and asynchronous instruction. We will provide services virtually: Special education, tutoring, homework support, school-based counseling, check and check out with staff, technology support and devices, and internet access as is available. Meals provided by pickup at the school site or at a local district.

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.

Walden Academy is committed to providing students and staff with a safe, in-person learning environment. The strategies outlined within this plan will be implemented to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread within our school. These strategies will be revised periodically (at least every 6 months) based upon COVID cases within our school and community and any new research/evidence that becomes available.

The following were used to inform the creation of this plan:

1. Walden Academy 2021 COVID 19 School Guidance Checklist
2. Walden Academy Staff and Parent Survey, August 2021
3. California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 Schools, August 2021.
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>
4. California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>
5. California Department of Education: Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>
6. Teacher and Staff Meetings.
7. California Healthy Kids Survey of students, staff and parents. May 2021.
8. Walden Academy Waiver to Reopen Application, September 2020.
9. Walden Academy Reopening Framework for 2020-21.
10. CDC Covid-19 Webpage. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index>.

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:
<http://www.waldenacademy.org/documents/Safe-Return-to-In-Person-Instruction.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 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.

Suzanne Tefs, Director/Superintendent, Walden Academy Charter School District, 1149 W. Wood Street, Willows, Glenn County, CA 95988 leadershipteam@waldenacademy.org 530-361-6480.

