

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



Updated: May 6, 2023

[Galax City Public Schools Website](https://www.galaxschools.us)

Section 1: 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 Galax City Public Schools (GCPS) 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 Adam Joyce, Director of Instruction, 276-236-2911 (adamjoyce@galaxschools.us).

Galax City Public Schools' response to the Covid-19 continues to be based on guidance from local, state and federal health officials. Our number one priority is the health and well-being of our students and staff. We offer in-person learning. Virtual learning is available to students through MOPs, Multi-Division Online Providers. For the 23-24 school year, GCPS plans to remain open 5 days a week from 8:00-3:15pm.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

Galax City Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. In addition, Galax City Public Schools has adopted safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing-** GCPS' facilities, including classrooms, cafeteria, library and other areas have been arranged so that we are in adherence to CDC and VDH guidelines
- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette-** All restroom facilities for students and staff are continuously cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. Numerous hand sanitizing stations have been placed in high traffic and
- congregate areas to assist in maintaining clean hands to curb surface area spread

- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation-** All buildings and busses are cleaned each school day to help ensure a safe environment. All schools have up to date HVAC Systems and proper ventilation.

Isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments- Each staff or student COVID-positive case that has come to the attention of GCPS administration is, with assistance from the VDH, handled in accordance with the CDC guidelines. From there, any person that was deemed to be in need of quarantine has been directed to do so by Galax City Public Schools Administration.

- **Diagnostic testing-** Diagnostic testing is available in the clinics at all three schools. (Galax High, Middle, and Elementary Schools)
- **Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities-** All adult and child Covid vaccinations made available to the general public by the state have been offered at the school or arrangements have been made with the vaccination site to help disseminate pertinent information to the public.
- **Coordination with state and local health officials-** GCPS remains in close contact with the Galax Health Department and the Mt. Rogers Health District. This partnership has been instrumental in serving our school.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Galax City 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.

GCPS places a high priority on the wellbeing of each child. Academic achievement for each student's prior school year will be assessed at the beginning of 2023-2024. Students not exhibiting satisfactory growth from the prior year will be supported with the opportunity to receive tutoring before, during and after the school day until the teacher and family agree that sufficient progress has been made. Moreover, students that are experiencing struggles in the classroom, regardless of the time of year, are encouraged to take advantage of our small classroom size. The teacher will contact the student and family to offer additional assistance. Small group and individual tutoring sessions are offered throughout each week to help students achieve or maintain academic success. School counselors, a school social worker, and a school psychologist are on hand each day to address any emotional or academic needs that students may have. Students with disabilities continue to receive all support necessary to help students and families navigate the school year. Nurse clinics are fully staffed to accommodate any medical needs that may arise during the day. School Resource Officers are available at each school to provide services to both students and staff alike. Families should feel comfortable contacting the school with any questions about their child's academic, emotional or mental health needs. A School Based Health Clinic staffed with a nurse practitioner will begin operation during the 23-24 school year and will be available to all students and staff who want to use it for on-site medical care.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

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

School board meetings provide the opportunity for public input on the work of the school division. Specifically, community members may provide input on matters regarding the division's response to COVID.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2024), Galax City 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 Galax City 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.

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted at galaxschools.us
- The plan is available in Spanish;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Adam Joyce, adamjoyce@galaxschools.us to request translation; 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 Adam Joyce, adamjoyce@galaxschools.us