

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (ARP Act)



LEA Information

1. LEA Name (one LEA per form)*

Chinle Unified School District #24

2. Entity ID Number*

4158

3. CTDS Number*

010224000

4. Plan's Primary Contact Name*

Sheila Betz

5. Plan's Primary Contact Email Address*

sbetz@chinleusd.k12.az.us

6. Plan's Primary Contact Phone Number*

9286749742

Please submit your Return to In-Person Learning Plan every six months from your first submission date.

Revision Timeline: January 2022-June 2022, July 2022-December 2022, January 2023-June 2023, and July 2023-September 2023

7. When did your LEA last review or revise your plan? You must review your LEA's plan at least every six months. Please provide mm/dd/yyyy.*

02/01/2022

All LEAs receiving ESSER III funds must make publicly available on their website, a plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. Please list the link where the plan/template is posted on the LEA's website.

8. Insert the link below to the LEA's Safe Return to In-Person plan located on your LEA website. The plan must be on the ADE template that was provided. *

<https://www.livebinders.com/b/2767512?tabid=f5dad8b1-c1bd-1e25-9065-159de9d9a0bb>

How the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

9. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on universal and correct wearing of masks?*

Yes

10. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on universal and correct wearing of masks.*

CUSD Governing Board has adopted policy requiring all staff, students and visitors to wear a correct fitting mask anytime they are on or in district property. Navajo Nation continues its mask mandate.

11. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)?*

Yes

12. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding).*

Internal policy requires that classroom and school capacity will be determined based upon the physical distancing recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control, AZ Department of Health Services and the Navajo Nation Department of Health Services. For example, at this time, whenever possible student seating accommodates 3 feet to six feet spacing between students, and at least six feet physical distance is encouraged any time possible.

13. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on handwashing and respiratory etiquette?*

Yes

14. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on handwashing and respiratory etiquette.*

Internal policy requires that signage is posted reminding students and staff of handwashing and respiratory etiquette. School nurses and teachers may provide training and reminders to students about this. Hand sanitizer units have been placed in every classroom, entrances/exits to playgrounds and on every school bus with a conduct expectation being that students should use these upon entrance and exit.

15. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation?*

Yes

16. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.*

Internal policy has been established to update all ventilation systems with MERV 13 filters. We have also purchased and installed ActivePure air purification units in classrooms, offices and school buses to further improve air quality. ActivePure technology is proven to neutralize pathogens¹, including the virus that causes COVID-19, on surfaces and in the air.

17. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments?*

Yes

18. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.*

Internal policy has been to practice contact tracing within our school district any time there is a student or staff member identified to be COVID-19 positive or exposed to a close contact who is COVID-19 positive. We also systemically collaborate with the Indian Health Services contact tracing department.

Any staff member or student who is COVID-19 positive or determined to be a close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual is not permitted to enter district property and must leave immediately if the individual is already present when the determination is made. Staff and students may only return to district property with evidence of a negative COVID test and resolution of symptoms associated with COVID-19.

CUSD staff members are required to sign an attestation indicating their understanding of the requirement to report to their supervisor any time they are a close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual, test positive for COVID-19 themselves or are tested for COVID-19 for any reason.

19. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on diagnostic and screening testing?*

Yes

20. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on diagnostic and screening testing.*

Internal policy is that any staff member or student who is COVID-19 positive or determined to be a close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual must submit to a contact tracing interview and follow guidance that may range from diagnostic testing to isolation depending upon vaccination status, presence of symptoms and COVID rapid test status.

We are also implementing a pooled testing strategy for screening through a formal, board approved partnership with Johns Hopkins University, Indian Health Services and Concentric by Ginkgo. Pooled testing can test 5 to 25 people using one test. Weekly, all consented students/staff in a class, pod, or cohort swab their own noses and place their swabs in a single tube (that's the pooling step). The samples in that tube are then run as a single sample, using one test. If the result comes back with a positive in the pool, our school nurses administer individual rapid tests on each pool member to find the positive individual. We then follow our contact tracing/isolation and quarantine policy to ensure safety of all students and staff on campus.

Effective January 2022, student athletes are required to participate in this process and to also test negative on a district administered rapid test before boarding the bus to travel to away contests.

21. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities?*

Yes

22. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.*

Through our partnership with Indian Health Services (IHS) we have hosted several COVID vaccination pods for students and staff on campus as early as January of 2021. At this time we have 98% of our staff fully vaccinated and we actively encourage all families and staff to get the vaccine. We are collaborating with IHS to vaccinate staff and students for the influenza vaccine and will do so for future boosters.

In January 2022, the governing board adopted a vaccine requirement policy for staff consistent with the requirements of the Navajo Nation. Any staff members who do not meet the definition of fully vaccinated must provide evidence of a negative PCR test to be at work. If the individual doesn't qualify for a PCR test because he/she was recently positive, he/she must provide evidence of a negative rapid test.

Effective January 2022, policy has also been implemented requiring student athletes to be fully vaccinated.

23. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies?*

Yes

24. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.*

CUSD continues to follow least restrictive environment policies for students with disabilities.

25. Has the LEA adopted a Governing Board policy on coordination with State and local health officials?*

Yes

26. Please describe the LEA's Governing Board policy on coordination with State and local health officials.*

We are actively engaged with the Navajo Nation Department of Health Services and Indian Health Services. Superintendent Natay attends regular meetings with both groups in order understand the current situation and best practices for CUSD to implement. Through our partnership with Indian Health Services we are able to leverage the results of their contact tracing services, implement COVID vaccine pods on campus and implement our pooled testing screening strategy.

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 food services.

27. How will the LEA ensure Continuity of Services?*

Briefly describe an overview of the continuity of services and in the following questions you will provide more detailed information.

Chinle Unified School District will ensure the continuity of services by balancing the priorities of academic needs, social emotional and health and safety needs of students and staff. We will coordinate funding streams to meet the fiscal needs associated with this. For example, challenges with the Transportation Support Level (TSL) in our FY2022 budget is set based on eligible riders and route miles from FY2021. We didn't have eligible riders in FY2021 due to the COVID pandemic causing the Navajo Nation to mandate virtual only learning for any school on the Navajo Nation. Our miles were significantly reduced because we were using our buses only to provide WiFi via routers on the buses for class access, deliver school breakfast/lunch and paper learning packets to designated locations for students in remote areas of our 4,200 square mile district. In school year 2022 we were happy to have been open for in person learning all year, with a high count of 76% of our students choosing to return to their brick-and-mortar classrooms. However, the funding formula was producing a significant shortfall in budget that was not consistent with our mileage and eligible riders in FY2022. In FY2022, we were still mandated by the Navajo Nation to provide a virtual option for families who did not wish to return to in person learning. We have seen a range of 61 – 76% of our students returning to in person learning in FY2022, but 39 - 24% have remained in virtual learning. The reduced funding formula (.95 FTE) for these students in our AOI and attendance challenges will also produce a shortfall in funding. In FY2023 we are able to require all students to return to in person learning and we will have more bus riders and miles than what will be funded by the TSL based on the FY2022 miles and rider counts. For these two COVID related reasons alone, we project the need to leverage ESSER funding as a coordinated funding stream to ensure continuity of services.

28. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services for students' academic needs?*

CUSD will provide continuity of services in the area of student academic needs by implementing the following strategies:

- Use state and local assessment data to determine standards and skills where students will require acceleration support.
- Deliver instruction from our standards based guaranteed and viable curriculum using effective evidence based instructional strategies.
- Provide extended learning and summer school options to provide support for students to accelerate learning.
- Adopt an Instructional Time Model (ITM) to assure our ability to deliver learning opportunities to students during unforeseen COVID related conditions.
- Provide necessary professional development to ensure teachers are prepared to deliver effective instruction.

29. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services for students' social, emotional, and mental health needs?*

CUSD will provide continuity of services in the area of student social emotional needs by implementing the following strategies:

- We will continue to implement our universal social emotional needs screener, DESSA (Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment). DESSA assesses eight social and emotional competencies and is intended to help educators plan instruction, document students' strengths and areas of need, inform progress monitoring, and evaluate program outcomes.
- We will continue to implement our Why Try and Resilience for Youth supplemental social emotional learning programs for Tier I and II needs.
- We have hired 4 social workers through an ESSER School Safety Grant and 3 school resource officers. These individuals will work with school counselors to support Tier I and II needs and will also provide Tier III support or coordinate with local resources to provide specialized services when needed.

30. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services for students' other needs?*

This may include student health and food services.

We will continue to provide breakfast and lunch every day for all CUSD enrolled students. During summer months we also operate a community feeding program that allows all community children age 18 or under to eat breakfast and lunch regardless of CUSD enrollment status. Our food distribution partnership with the St. Mary's food bank will continue for families and community. Additionally, we will provide dinner for students enrolled in extended learning programs.

31. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services for staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs?*

CUSD provides the following services for all CUSD Staff Members:

- TELADOC is a service that allows CUSD employees to access advice from a US Board Certified Doctor 24/7/365 by telephone, app or email with NO COPAY. Employees may access this service online or by telephone.
- Jorgensen Brooks Group counseling services are free of charge. Local, in-person clinical appointments can be made Monday through Friday, 8:00am through 4:30pm. Telephone and Internet Chat clinical appointments (45 minutes with licensed therapists) are offered, Monday through Saturday, 5:00am through 6:00pm. Crisis services are available 24 hours/7 days. Services include:
 - o Marital Relationship
 - o Parent/Child Conflicts
 - o Grief and Loss
 - o Anxiety
 - o Stress
 - o Depression
 - o Substance Abuse
 - o Workplace Issues
 - o Gambling
 - o Other Concerns

32. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services for staff's other needs?*

This may include student health and food services.

CUSD provides the following supports to meet other staff needs:

- 15:1 Academic Coach to teacher ratio for teacher professional development support.
- Provide weekly job embedded professional development to support teacher.
- Support economic challenges by providing competitive salaries, paid health insurance, and retention stipends to returning staff members.
- CUSD is absorbing the annual cost of increased health insurance costs due to COVID-19 claims in 2020-21.

The LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services through September 30, 2023

33. Describe the process used to seek public input, and how that input was taken into account in the revision of the plan.*

CUSD has sought and considered feedback from the public through the following steps:

- We have administered 7 family surveys since June of 2020 to gain feedback about family's readiness to return to schools in person based on our plan and the relative current situation with COVID-19 cases in the community.
- Our 2021-22 and 2022-23 school reopening plans evolved from our 2020-21 onsite support plan. Our onsite support plan was posted on the district website throughout the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. As the plan has evolved, specific presentation and feedback opportunities include but are not limited to:
 - o Indian Health Services and Office of Environmental Health Protection representatives reviewed our plan, walked through our facilities and provided actionable feedback in order for approval to allow students on campus to be granted.
 - o We presented this plan to Navajo Tribal Leaders through the Dine' Department of Education during ESSA Tribal Consultation on March 31, 2021 and again in October of 2021, and again in March 2022.
 - o During the October 2021 and March 2022 tribal consultation meetings we did specifically request the Navajo Nation to consider lifting the virtual learning requirement so that we could attract all our students back to brick and mortar classrooms. At this time there is flexibility in the requirement for virtual learning and our Governing School Board has adopted a board resolution supporting a requirement for Chinle Unified School District students to return to in person learning in SY2023 with no virtual option.
 - o A focus group was conducted with the Indian Education and Parent Advisory Committees in October 2021 related to what's working and what needs improvement with our reopening implementation.
 - o We made a pictorial print copy version of the reopening plan and put one in every mailbox in the communities that we serve.
 - o Upon reviewing the reopening plan, the CUSD Governing Board adopted a resolution to reopen schools in person with a virtual option on April 14, 2021 at a public board meeting.
 - o Indian Health Services pediatricians drafted a letter of support for our in person reopening plan.
 - o Superintendent Natay presented our plan at 8 of the Chapter Houses that our district serves. All 8 adopted resolutions of support for our plan to reopen schools in person.
 - o All supporting resolutions were provided to the Dine' Department of Education and council delegates as documentation to be considered in the Navajo Nation Council decision to allow public schools to reopen for in person learning.
 - o The plan has been reviewed by the Navajo Nation Government, the Chinle Unified School District Governing Board, Indian Education Committee and Parent Advisory Committee.
 - o We continue to participate in regular meetings with Indian Health Services to monitor the implementation of our plan.

34. Did you make any revisions/changes to this plan from your last plan submission?*

Yes