



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*

01 02 24 000

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 Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan every six months from your prior submission date.

Revision Timeline: May 2023-September 2023

7. Since your last submission date, when did your LEA last review and/or revise your plan? Please provide the updated mm/dd/yyyy of your review/revision. This date should be updated from your last submission. *

07/31/2023

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 with directions on how to find your LEA's Safe Return to In-Person plan located on your LEA website (do not link directly to the PDF). The plan must be on the ADE template that will be downloaded from EMAC after completing your responses.*

<https://www.livebinders.com/b/2767512?tabid=6cec0838-c833-97a9-f50a-e44f026327e0>

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. Effective summer of 2023, Navajo Nation no longer requires masks for schools located on the Navajo Nation, and masks will be optional for students, staff and visitors on our campuses for the 2023-2024 school year

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.

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. We are going to complete an HVAC system upgrade in our schools and facilities during the 2023-2024 school year.

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 collaborate with the Indian Health Services on an as needed basis.

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.

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 continue implementing a pooled testing strategy for screening. Weekly, all consented students/staff in a class, pod, or cohort swab their own noses and place their swabs in a tube. The samples in that tube are then lab tested to test for any positive cases. We then follow our contact tracing/isolation and quarantine policy to ensure safety of all students and staff on campus.

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 more than 90% of our staff fully vaccinated and we actively encourage all families and staff to get the vaccine. We continue to collaborate with IHS to promote vaccination for staff and students for the influenza vaccine and will do so for future boosters.

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 meetings as scheduled 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 implement vaccination 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 prioritizing academic needs and supporting 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 experienced 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 did 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. We are also working to ensure that we are able to recruit and retain the high effective staff necessary to provide high quality, equitable education opportunities for our students to mitigate learning loss in the wake of the pandemic related school closures. Due to Navajo Nation requirements beyond our control, our district was closed for 18 months for any in person learning and some families elected to remain virtual for an additional 10 months. The 2023 school year was the first year that we were able to reopen with 100% of our students returning for in person learning.

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.
- Offer enrollment opportunities in our approved AOI on a case by case basis and only for very limited and unique student/family situations.
- Provide necessary professional development to ensure teachers are prepared to deliver effective instruction.
- Implement recruitment and retention strategies to combat staffing shortages.

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.
- All teachers will be trained in the PAXIS Good Behavior game for behavior management which will serve as part of our Tier I MTSS program.
- 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 direct Tier III support or coordinate with local resources to provide specialized services when needed.
- We are providing mental health first aid training to social workers and school counselors.
- We have engaged in a strategic planning process to establish consistent and effective resourcing, systems and practices to support Tier I, II and III SEL and mental health needs for students.

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?*

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 and staff recruitment/retention by providing competitive salaries, paid health insurance, and retention stipends to returning staff members.
- CUSD has absorbed the annual cost of increased health insurance costs that began with 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, October of 2021, March of 2022 and October of 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 we are able to require in person learning for all students again.
 - o A focus group was conducted with the Indian Education and Parent Advisory Committees in October 2021 and September 2022 related to what's working and what needs improvement with our reopening implementation.
 - o We produced 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.
 - o The Navajo Nation Department of Dine' Education has also been appraised of the plan through twice annual ESSA Tribal Consultation meetings.

After completing all responses in EMAC, save your information. Then, use the red download button to create a copy of your completed form to be uploaded to your LEA website. Once your form is uploaded to your LEA website, log back into EMAC to click the blue submit button and submit your form to be reviewed by your specialist. Your EMAC submission will not be approved unless this updated form is on your LEA website.

34. Did you upload the completed EMAC form to your LEA website?*

Yes