

## Gifts From the Federal Government for Public Schools

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law. This law provides \$1.9 trillion dollars to assist in recovery from the COVID-19 debacle, and \$122 billion dollars of this money is allocated to state education agencies and school districts. The money for the schools will be provided via the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Relief ("ARP ESSER") Fund.

In order to qualify for funding, school districts and community schools must post a "Safe Return to In-Person and Continuity of Services Plan" on their websites by June 24 2021. The school plan must include information about the extent to which the school or school system intends to address Centers for Disease Control Guidance in these areas:

- universal and correct wearing of masks
- physical distancing (e.g. including use of cohorts/podding)
- 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 improve vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students

The school or school system is required to review and revise its plan if necessary at least every 6 months through September 30, 2023. Apparently the federal government and the schools intend to be engaged in COVID management for at least another 26 months. This is not going to end anytime soon. [1]

The Pickerington School System in Central Ohio consists of two high schools, two junior high schools, seven elementary schools, a preschool, and an alternative school. The system reports that about 10,600 students are enrolled at this time.[2] The school system recently received \$6,183,229.20 in ARP ESSER Funding.[3] According to the school system's online plan, here is what Pickerington parents and their children can look forward to for the 2021-22 school year:[4]

- The school system plans to "...follow mandates/requirements required by the Governor, Ohio/Franklin Department of Health, and Ohio Department of Education. These mandates/requirements may affect any/all proposed courses of action."
- Masks will be optional but will be made mandatory if the Governor so orders.
- Physical distancing is not possible with a return to in-person learning, but "...frequent hand-washing, cleaning, and maintaining healthy facilities, and other mitigation protocols" will remain.
- "...please also be advised that we do not know to what extent Franklin County Public Health will still be enforcing quarantine protocols for COVID exposure during the 2021-2022 school year. The District therefore urges families to consider this as decisions are made about whether to wear masks or get vaccinations for the 2021-2022 school year."
- Links and resources for vaccination are provided for both staff and students.

Contact tracing is alive and well in the Pickerington school system. If a student, teacher, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school nurse will submit information about the "case" to the Franklin County Public Health Department. The principal will be notified so that he/she can start identifying close contacts, defined as anyone who was within 6 feet for 15 minutes cumulative or

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longer 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. If the person who tests positive has no symptoms then the 48 hours starts on the date that the test took place.

There's more. The principal is also supposed to identify any classrooms that the "positive person" was in and confirm the setup of the classroom, which should be configured for all students to remain three feet apart. If this is the case, then the affected individuals qualify for "modified quarantine." Modified quarantine means that the students can come to school as long as they wear masks covering their mouths and noses at all times. The only extracurricular activity allowed during the quarantine is sports.

Additionally, the principal is supposed to provide a list of close contacts to a staff person who creates a spreadsheet, which is used to take attendance and to note days that students who do not qualify for modified quarantine are supposed to be absent. This staff member is also supposed to call each close contact to notify these contacts that they have been "exposed," and are ordered to quarantine. A "Close Contact" email is to be sent as a follow-up.

All school families and staff are to be notified via email that a "case" has been identified in the building. A "class/activity letter" is sent to all students who have classes or activities with the person identified as a "case." It is noted that due to HIPAA rules close contacts cannot be told who the "case" is.[5]

If this seems excessive, remember that this school system has received over six million dollars, part of which is to perpetuate this type of COVID nonsense.

The state of New York is receiving \$9 billion dollars in ARP ESSER funds and its plan includes expanded access to vaccines for staff and students.[6] This is frightening because many states have enacted the Mature Minor Doctrine, which allows minors to make their own decisions about healthcare if they are deemed "mature enough" to do so. Washington State allows this, and according to its guidelines, the "medical services" that can be provided without parental consent include vaccinations. Healthcare providers determine if the minor meets the criteria, and this is a subjective decision.[7]

The bottom line: There will be very few safe schools in the U.S. to which you can send your children during the 2021-2022 school year. Masks are a small part of the master plan to destroy the emotional and mental health of children. In fact, since masks have become such a big issue, many school officials have cleverly stated that masks will not be required during the coming school year. But I'm willing to bet that no school systems have disclosed to parents the full extent of their COVID management strategies which are concerning with or without masks; and which allow for masks to be mandated for students exposed to anyone who tests positive with one of the fake tests, or for the entire student body if the government demands it.

A growing collection of stories in which COVID-related policies have resulted in abuse of children as young as five years of age shows that many school officials and teachers are willing to do anything they are told to do by government and health officials – even if it harms the children for whom they are supposed to be responsible.

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Parental pressure is not likely to make much difference, as long as millions of dollars are flowing from Washington D.C. to school system bank accounts, and those receiving these funds have abdicated their responsibility to families and the communities they used to serve.

Note: Parents will have very difficult decisions to make concerning the 2021/2022 school year within the next few weeks and we intend to provide assistance and resources. For information email [pampopper@msn.com](mailto:pampopper@msn.com)

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[1] <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/American-Rescue-Plan-Safe-Return-to-In-person-Ins>

[2] <https://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/at-a-glance/#:~:text=Driven%20by%20a%20dynamic%20and,facilities%20educating%20more%2010%2C000%20students.>

[3] <https://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/arp-esser-pickerington-local-schools-plan/>

[4] <https://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/arp-esser-pickerington-local-schools-plan/>

[5] Procedure for reporting COVID cases.

<https://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Procedure-for-reporting-COVID-cases.pdf>

[6] <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-posts-state-plans-use-american-rescue-plan-funds-support-students-and-safe-and-sustained-reopening-schools>

[7] <https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/PDF/guidelines/Minors%20Health%20Care%20Rights%20Washington%20State.pdf>