Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #224-21

DATE: August 13, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **U.S. Department of Education Releases Return to School Roadmap to Support Students, Schools, Educators and Communities**

On August 2, the United States Department of Education (USED) released a *Return to School Roadmap* resource in preparation for returning to safe, healthy, in-person learning this fall. The *Roadmap* provides key resources and supports for students, parents, educators and school communities to build excitement around returning to classrooms this school year. It also outlines how federal funding can support the safe and sustained return to in-person learning. Over the course of the next several weeks as schools reopen nationwide, the *Roadmap* will lay out actionable strategies to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) updated guidance for K-12 schools, so that schools can minimize transmission and sustain in-person learning for the entire school-year.

As part of the launch of the Return to School Roadmap, the USED released:

- [A fact sheet for schools, families, and communities on the Return to School Roadmap](#), reviewing the three "Landmark" priorities, and elevating schools and districts that are addressing each in effective ways.
- [A guide for schools and districts](#) outlining what schools can do to protect the health and safety of students, including increasing access to vaccinations and steps for implementing the CDC's recently updated K-12 school guidance.

- [A checklist that parents can use to prepare themselves and their children for a safe return to in-person learning this fall](#), leading with vaccinating eligible children and ensuring unvaccinated students wear masks.

Over the coming weeks, the USED will provide additional resources to schools, districts, and directly to parents and students as part of the Return to School Roadmap. This includes:

- Working with partners across the federal government to provide support to schools and districts and answer questions about expanding access to vaccinations for students 12+ and implementing CDC's recently updated K-12 school guidance.
- Holding town hall meetings with parents and parent organizations to highlight ways schools and districts are preparing to keep students safe during in-person learning and underscoring the importance of providing social, emotional, and mental health supports for students in addition to academic supports in our schools.
- Releasing implementation tools for schools, educators and parents to address the three priority areas of health and safety, student wellbeing, and academics — in areas ranging from supporting schools in their efforts to address lost instructional and extracurricular time to providing information on how American Rescue Plan funds can be used to expand access to mental health supports for our nation's students and educators, and provide additional academic supports.
- Updating Volumes 1 and 2 of the Department of Education's COVID-19 Handbooks to reflect the recently updated CDC K-12 guidance.

In addition, the USED has created a [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#), with information about COVID-mitigation practices, educator supports, student supports, and more.

School divisions are reminded that their applications for formula funds under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) I, II, and III programs can be amended to reflect changing needs and priorities in response to COVID-19. School divisions should request reimbursement for ESSER formula funds expended on a frequent basis and in advance of the end of the performance for each grant award.

For more information

For more information about USED resources, contact their press office at (202) 401-1576, or by email, at press@ed.gov. For information about ESSER I, II, and III awards, visit the Federal Pandemic Relief Programs webpage or contact vdoefederalrelief@doe.virginia.gov.

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