



# EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

2023-2024 ESSER Plan



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# Letter from the Superintendent

Welcome back to Excellence in Leadership Academy and thank you for the opportunity to serve your families in 2023-2024 school year.

Thank you for your support and commitment in order to ensure our students will continue to learn and grow. Excellence in Leadership Academy remains committed to doing everything possible to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff. We will continue to follow all appropriate guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as well as the Texas Education Agency and the Hidalgo County Health Department.

Our goal as a charter school is to help every child learn and grow. We are eager to partner with you in this endeavor. As teachers, staff, and parents, we have a shared responsibility to prepare our children for the future; therefore, we look forward to providing a rich learning experience for all students. Thank you for choosing Excellence in Leadership Academy where we have, *“Leaders Soaring to Excellence”*.

We look forward to an amazing school year. We are excited to have all our students back with us this fall!

Sincerely,

*Dr. Irma Castillo*

Superintendent

# Introduction

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY looks forward to welcoming students back to school on **August 16, 2023**. Despite the challenges with COVID-19, our district will continue to provide an excellent education to our students, which will include in-person instruction. As public wellness continues to be a priority, we are planning for a safe 2023-2024 school year with a focus on the health, safety and well-being of our staff, students, and community, which is of utmost importance to ELA.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is planning to follow recommendations regarding instructional planning and operations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Education Agency, and state and local health officials.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will inform parents and the community of any necessary changes that will occur throughout the year. Our priority is to keep our community informed of any changes or updates. ELA will provide updated information in our parent weekly newsletters, memos, website, Facebook, ClassDojo, and SchoolMessenger.

ELA will continue to monitor the pandemic and understands that this plan will be modified as public health situations arise. Updates will be made as we receive new information and guidance from the Texas Education Agency, Hidalgo County Health Department and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This plan is divided into two sections:

1. Instructional Plan
2. Operations/Safety Plan

# Texas Education Agency Public Health Guidance



## Public Health Guidance

August 1, 2022

Executive Order GA-38 (GA-38), which has the effect of state law under Section 418.012 of the Texas Government Code, requires Texas public school systems to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic in compliance with the published guidance of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). This document constitutes TEA's guidance under GA-38 and takes effect immediately, replacing all prior guidance.

**Public school systems are to operate in compliance with existing state laws and regulations, including all executive orders issued by the governor of Texas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that are currently in effect.**

The following are examples of existing state laws and regulations applicable to the operations of Texas public school systems during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- If an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its [local health department](#), in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Per GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. GA-38 addresses government-mandated face coverings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As provided in this [Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Rule](#), school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who have or are suspected of having COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. As noted in the rule, exclusion shall continue until the conditions for re-entry are met:
  - For children with symptoms, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free, and other symptoms have improved.
  - Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

TEA recommends that public school systems consult with their local public health authorities and local legal counsel before making final decisions regarding implementation of the state requirements referenced by this guidance.

This guidance is subject to change as new information becomes available.

# Governor Gregg Abbott GA 36- Executive Order

## *Governor Gregg Abbott GA 36- Executive Order*

Gov. Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order on May 18, 2021, prohibiting governmental entities in Texas- including counties, cities, school districts, public health authorities or governmental officials- from requiring or mandating mask-wearing.

According to the governor's order, public schools may continue to follow current mask-wearing guidelines through June 4. After June 4, no students, teacher, parent or other staff member or visitor can be required to wear a mask while on campus.

Beginning May 21, local governments or officials that attempt to impose a mask mandate or impose a limitation that's inconsistent or conflicting with the Executive Order can be subject to a fine up to \$1,000, the governor's order states.

After June 4, 2021, face masks are optional.



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

May 18, 2021

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
12:15 PM  
MAY 8 2021  
Secretary of State

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol Room 1E.8  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

Executive Order No. GA-36 relating to the prohibition of governmental entities and officials from mandating face coverings or restricting activities in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

The original executive order is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Gregory S. Davidson  
Executive Clerk to the Governor  
GSD/gsd

Attachment



# Instructional Plan Design

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will continue in-person learning for the 2023-2024 school year. **Instruction:** Instruction will commence on **Wednesday, August 16, 2023**, and conclude on **Friday, May 24, 2024**. The district will provide the following instructional models to our students.

**Traditional Classroom Instruction/In Person Instruction** - Students and teachers will attend class in-person, five days a week, with safety measures aligned to state and federal guidelines and recommendations.

- Students are required to attend classes Monday through Friday.
- Daily Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m.
- Students will continue to utilize technology devices in the classroom as instructional support.
- Teachers will provide in-person instruction.
- Students will engage in high-quality learning experiences designed to meet all students' needs.
- Campus-designed safety procedures will be implemented by following federal, state, and local guidelines and recommendations.

## Attendance

Students are required to attend classes Monday through Friday. Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m.

### 100% In-Person Instruction

- Teachers and students will work five days a week.
- All instruction is delivered in a traditional classroom setting with safety protocols in place.
- Students will follow a regular schedule and receive 100% in person instruction.
- Attendance will be taken during the required attendance time.
- State truancy guidelines will be enforced, as per Texas Law, requiring students/families to attend truancy court based on 2023-2024 guidelines.

# CDC/ Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) COVID-19 School Re-Admission Criteria

Coronavirus disease 2019 commonly referred to as COVID-19 is a disease requiring exclusion from school under 25 Tex. Admin. Code § 97.7.

- As provided in this [Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Rule](#), school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who have or are suspected of having COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. As noted in the rule, exclusion shall continue until the conditions for re-entry are met:
  - For children with symptoms, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free, and other symptoms have improved.
  - Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

## Accelerated Instruction- House Bill 4545

To accelerate student learning to grade level TEKS mastery, we must rethink how we support teachers, adopt, and implement instructional materials, and provide more time for the students most in need.

### House Bill 4545 and House Bill 1416:

House Bill 4545 passed in the 87th Regular Legislative Session, with acceleration instruction practices continuing to be required during the 2023-2024 school year, based on results from Spring 2023. HB 4545 established requirements for accelerated instruction for students who do not pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). HB 1416 passed in the 88th Texas Legislature and loosened some of the HB 4545 requirements to include:

House Bill 1416 updated accelerated instruction requirements from House Bill 4545 by:

- Removing the requirement for Accelerated Learning Committees while requiring Accelerated Education Plan after student fails to achieve approaches or higher on two consecutive assessments in the same subject area
- Limiting tutoring to 2 subjects and no longer including optional assessment administration
- Increasing student to tutor ratio from 3:1 to 4:1 ratio for tutoring group size
- Clarifying that students who take STAAR-Alt 2, are retained, or take substitute high school assessments aren't subject to requirements
- Reducing minimum hour requirement from 30 to 15 for some students
- Adding Local Education Agencies (LEAs) receiving compensatory education funding as a criteria for included LEAs (previously LEAs receiving funding from Strong Foundations Grant Program, CRRSAA or ARP)
- Providing student to teacher ratio waivers for use of approved online curriculum (approvals available spring 2024)
- Clarifying that parents may modify or remove supplemental instruction requirements with a letter to campus administrator
- Clarifying that parents must be notified of student failure to perform on applicable tests
- Requiring TEA to monitor implementation of accelerated instruction

## Learning Acceleration

- For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grades 3–8 or STAAR (EOC) end-of-course assessments, accelerated instruction requirements specifying that it must include:
  - Receiving supplemental instruction (tutoring) after school and/or intervention.
  - Implementation of HQIM (high quality instructional materials), such as Amplify.
  - Additional instructional support staff including two academic interventionists, literacy coach and Data Fellow have been on-boarded to help with the implementation of HQIM. This will continue during the 2023-2024 school year.

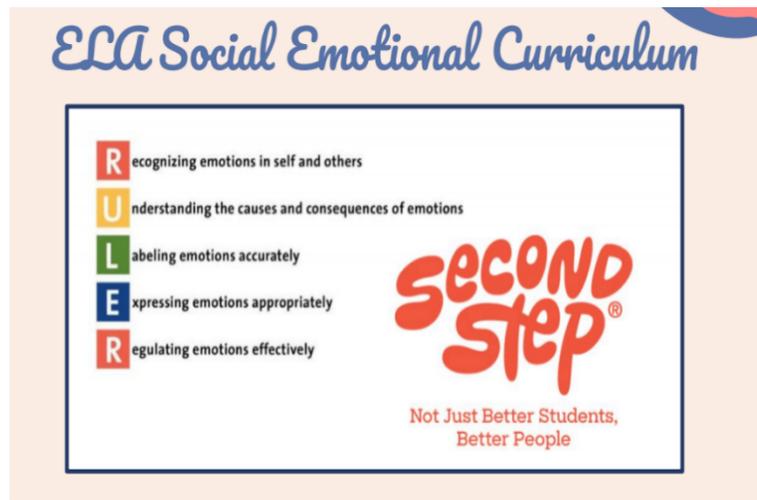
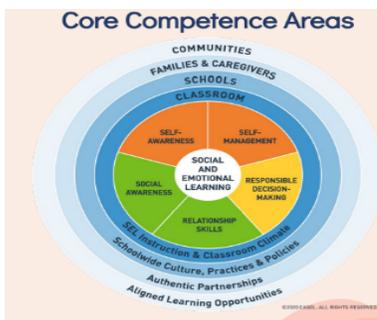
## Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program

Excellence in Leadership Academy wellness is a holistic approach dedicated to the mental and emotional wellness of students, families, and staff.

- Schoolwide SEL helps students excel academically, build stronger relationships, and lead happier, healthier, more fulfilling lives.
- Systemic SEL implementation is an ongoing, long-term process that involves a coordinated approach to reach students in all settings where they spend their time—in classrooms, throughout the school, in the home, and in the community.
- ELA can develop family partnerships around SEL by providing opportunities for two-way communication that invites families to understand, experience, inform, and support the social and emotional development of their students.
- Accessibility of in-class SEL program resources during lessons.
- Homeroom teachers of grades PK-5<sup>th</sup> will provide SEL instruction from 8:00-8:15 a.m. Monday-Friday.
- Students in grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> will receive SEL instruction during their CTE instruction time.

## Process for Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning

1. Build Foundational Support
2. Create a Plan
3. Strengthen Adult SEL
4. Promote SEL for Students
5. Practice Continuous Improvement



# STOPit

Excellence in Leadership Academy uses STOPit, an online and app-based system. With STOPit, students can submit anonymous reports containing text, photos, or video. Administrators are then able to manage incidents in a backend management system called STOPit Admin. STOPit Admin provides efficient and powerful investigative tools to our staff, including the ability to message with the reporter, which will allow us to address issues instantly.

STOPit does more than just help schools address incidents and mitigate risk. STOPit will also help us go beyond reacting to bullying and inappropriate behavior, and instead start deterring it. As young people continue to engage more with technology every day, we are taking a proactive step to empower our students to become **Upstanders** in our community in the way that they feel most comfortable. We believe our adoption of STOPit is an important step in our continued effort to provide a positive school climate and a safe learning environment for our students.

Students have the power to help put an end to harmful and inappropriate behavior they see online through social media and other means. They can use STOPit to reach out for help if they or a peer are facing a personal crisis or experiencing bullying, abuse, or are otherwise in need of assistance. Our goal with STOPit is to create a safer, kinder, school community both online and off.

## How to STOPit

Students and community members may report concerns and threats, such as:

- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Inappropriate student/teacher relationships
- Violence/Threats
- Hazing
- Weapons Possession
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Substance Abuse
- Intolerance/Discrimination

## Parental Involvement

Excellence in Leadership Academy will provide trainings to parents on SEL, literacy & math strategies in-person or via zoom.

- Parent Literacy
  - ✓ December & April Trainings
- Parent SEL
  - ✓ Tropical Behavioral
  - ✓ Hope Family Health Clinic
  - ✓ Nuestra Clinica Del Valle

# Operations Plan

## COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols

- Face masks covering nose and mouth will continue to be highly encouraged at ELA by all staff, students, parents, and visitors.
- COVID-19 Screening - all individuals should be screened at home, for COVID-19 related symptoms (Fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, congestion). Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Any student that tests COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 5 days. Any staff or student that is considered a close contact will be notified with more information regarding quarantine procedures, if needed, and next steps. If an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID19, the school will report each individual case to the local and state health department.
- Hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer throughout the day is highly encouraged for students, employees, and visitors at ELA. Hand sanitizer dispensers are readily available throughout the school and will be replenished as needed.
- ELA will continue to have access to free, optional COVID testing. Parents/guardians must sign a consent form prior to administration of a COVID test to any student.
- Visitors are allowed for scheduled times except during mealtimes.
- Daily temperature checks will be conducted as appropriate.

## Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Student safety is one of our primary concerns. To provide the safest environment for our students, ELA has an organized drop-off and pick-up plan that every parent, guardian, carpool driver and daycare should follow. If an adjustment is made throughout the school year, a notice will be sent home in your child's homework binder and/or other communication media such as ClassDojo and SchoolMessenger. Thank you in advance for helping us keep our children safe!

## Safety Reminders

- Students should keep the vehicle door closed until it stops fully then exits the car.
- Students should not walk across the parking lot unattended. If a parent parks in the lot, he/she must walk the children.
- Please use designated parking spaces- do not park in "red zones".
- Please avoid texting or cell phone use while driving through the parking lot or in the school zone.
- Please help us to expedite the afterschool pick-up by having the "pick-up" tag with your child's name and grade level hanging from your rearview mirror. If you have any questions, please contact the front office.

## Morning Drop-off

- All Students must be dropped off on the east side of the school building.
- Students can have random temperature checks and are encouraged to use hand sanitizer upon entering the school building.
- When entering the parking lot, form a single file line along the parking lot.

- Please have your child(ren) ready to exit the vehicle, in order to expedite drop-off.
- Please remain in your car. The driveways are for loading and unloading only. If you want to stop, please pull into a parking space in front of the building.
- Please do not drop off children in the parking lot. Students must be escorted from the parking lot to the front office.
- Please do not double park or block another car in the parking lot.
- All students will enter through the east side door and walk directly to their classroom or cafeteria.
- Student arrival time is 7:15 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. The school opens at 7:15 a.m. and supervision begins at that time. *For safety reasons, please do not drop off students before 7:15 a.m.*
- Students should be in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. Students are considered tardy after 8am.

## Dismissal Procedures

There are choices for how your child is dismissed at the end of the day; however, students will not be dismissed after 2:30pm. It will be important to choose one and be consistent each day or each week. It can be confusing for both your child and the teacher if there are changes. We know there might be times that a change is necessary; therefore, in the event of an emergency or an unexpected change to your child's afternoon pick-up, please send a note to the teacher with your child or contact the office no later than 2:00 p.m. This will allow school personnel adequate time to relay message(s) to classroom teachers/students. Thank you for scheduling your medical/wellness appointments after 2:30pm in order to maximize student learning.

- Please help us eliminate any confusion that occurs while the staff is trying to locate your child, which may be waiting at a different pick-up area. We must ensure that pick-up time is safe and orderly. Accordingly, communication will ensure the staff is focused on the students they are monitoring and surrounding traffic.

## Dismissal Choices

### **Carline for single students, multiple students/families, and daycares:**

- Students will be waiting in their classrooms until their parents/guardians are present for pick-up, at which point staff will call out student names via walkie talkie,
- Students will exit through the east side of our school building while staff assists students in locating and boarding their vehicles.
- To avoid congestion in the parking lot, parents will remain in their vehicles, travel through the pick-up line and pull forward as space allows.

### **Pedestrian students/parents (walkers; neighborhood children)**

- “Parent walk-up” is only an option for our neighborhood children but the student(s) must be accompanied by their parent/guardian.
- Parent/guardian may walk to the east side and child will be dismissed to the parent/guardian.
- We ask that if you are planning to walk up to the building, that you inform the teacher prior to doing so.

### **ELA After school program (will start on August 21st)**

- Students participating in the afterschool program will report to the assigned afterschool teacher. The afterschool program is from 3:30-5:00.

# School Facilities

ELA school facilities and buildings will be maintained to meet optimal cleaning and disinfecting standards. ELA will continue to assess and make proper changes as needed to efficiently address any need or concern that may arise.

Cleaning of Facilities:

- School will undergo daily cleaning using approved products with residual technologies to ensure that surfaces stay clean and sanitized for longer periods.
- School will have hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the building.
- School will have posters indicating CDC recommendations.
- School will have plastic partitions readily available for student desks or tables, as needed.

## Classrooms

Classroom protocols and procedures will include expectations regarding covering your cough, not sharing food, and hand washing or sanitizing, etc. Teachers will ensure high-touch areas in the classroom are sanitized throughout the day. All classrooms will be outfitted with:

- Visual reminders of CDC guidelines will be posted throughout the campus, highlighting best practices.
- Refillable alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations.
- Access to disinfectant to sanitize working surfaces.
- Air purifiers are in every classroom and offices.
- Personal protective equipment can be provided by the school nurse.
- School-issued technology should be utilized when students are involved in collaborative work.
- Group or pair work will be implemented as directed by teachers.

Classrooms will undergo daily cleaning using approved anti-microbial products with residual technologies to ensure that surfaces stay clean and sanitized for longer periods, as appropriate.

Classrooms will have hand sanitizer dispensers filled so students can use as they enter and exit.

Restrooms and common areas will have signage addressing safety measures recommended by the CDC including:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash can.
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
5. Parents will receive communication regarding guidelines and informing them of the operational adjustments.

# Water Fountains

## Water Fountain Usage

### Student

- Students are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottle for use throughout the day and expected to take water bottles home to be cleaned daily.

### Parent

- Parents are asked to secure a reusable water bottle for their child to bring to school daily.
- Parents are asked to assist students, as needed, to clean water bottles daily.
- Please label your child's reusable water bottles with name and grade level.

# Child Nutrition Program

Excellence in Leadership Academy will continue to feed our students following CDC, TDA, and USDA guidelines. ELA has made the necessary changes to efficiently serve our students.

## During the day

- Meals will be served to students in the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch. Custodians will coordinate daily for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing duties.
- Food service staff will continue to wear gloves and hair nets when serving meals.
- School meals will be served to students following CNS protocols and procedures.
- CDC recommendation will be adhered to during any meal distribution and consumption.
- Delivery of outside food is allowed.
- Students may bring lunch from home and parents can also drop off lunch in the front office, which will be delivered to students by designated staff.

# Procedures

District procedures will be updated to reflect updated TEA and CDC guidelines. The duties and responsibilities of some employees will be amended to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. For any COVID-19 questions, please contact the principal or our health assistant.

Parents/guardians will receive updated information outlined in the COVID-19 ELA ESSER Plan with CDC guidelines and recommendations included. The plan will be posted on the district's website. Adjustments will be made to mitigate concerns related to COVID-19. These recommendations are compiled from the Texas Department of Health, Texas Education Agency (TEA), Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC), and the Texas School Safety Center.