



LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Introduction and Background

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)'s [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#), in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides an additional \$122 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students. As with the previous ESSER funds available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families. Additional information on ARP ESSER may be found in the NJDOE's [funding comparison fact sheet](#).

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan) A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. Under the interim final requirements published in [Volume 86, No. 76 of the Federal Register](#) by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), an LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Pursuant to those requirements, **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.** The NJDOE intends to make LEA ARP ESSER Fund applications available in EWEG on May 24, 2021 and LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE via EWEG. To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE is providing the following template.

This template incorporates the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan. The questions in the template below will be included in the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG. LEAs will submit responses to the questions within the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG by June 24, 2021. The NJDOE hopes that this template will allow LEAs to effectively plan for that submission and to easily post the information to their websites as required by the ARP Act.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy [announced](#) that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it becomes available.

Template: LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: East Newark Public School District

Date: 6/9/21

Date Revised (8/16/21):

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe 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 CDC.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

- School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age.
- Students are required to wear face masks unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.
- Accommodation for students who are unable to wear a face covering will be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- If a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual at the point of entry, the visitor's entry to the school/district facility will be denied.

Mask wearing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance at the time.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)

Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. This will be achieved by ensuring students are seated at least six feet apart when possible. If a school in the district is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be made including but not limited to using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of the table or on opposite ends of the table, spaced apart.

All instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities must comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.

The school district will mitigate risk, limit and/or eliminate direct contact with equipment (lessons with no equipment), and will not allow sharing of equipment. If equipment must be shared, the equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between each use. The school district will designate specific areas for each class during recess.

Social distancing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Custodial staff will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Such stations will be in each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), at entrances and exits of buildings and near toilets.

Children ages five and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.

For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations will be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).

School officials will require students to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing.

If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) will be used.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance at the time.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments

All school and district administrators, School Safety Specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee will be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing conducted by State, county, and local officials.

School officials will engage the expertise of their school nurses and that of the Atlantic County Department of Health in the application of contact tracing.

The NJDOE will credit certified School Safety Specialists with three hours of training upon completion of Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing course. The District's nurses have been encouraged to participate in this course.

Based on the collection of screening data from both staff and students, contact tracing information will be collected as well as reported if needed. Staff will be provided information on contact tracing and the protocol the district will follow.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Upon arrival, staff will self-screen daily with the district screening protocol. If presenting with symptoms the staff member will be sent to the school nurse to assess the employee's health. Staff will sign in and out daily through the Genesis Staff Portal on their own device to avoid coming into the main office. Students will be visually screened during their homeroom time every day upon entering the building. A protocol of questions will be asked and students will be observed for symptoms. If presenting with symptoms they will be directed to the nurse, following hallway escorting procedures.

Diagnostic and screening testing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance at the time.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

As per CDC guidelines, school nurses will assist with setting up vaccination appointments for students, family members and staff (if eligible) as needed.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible will be conducted to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance at the time.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies

Students with disabilities will have all appropriate accommodations addressed based on their needs in their IEP, which will support their health, as well as safety. This will include consultations with all staff so that all precautions are in place, as well as obtaining any additional necessary supplies or resources required to accommodate their needs.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies will be enforced to the greatest extent possible, based upon the most recent CDC/NJDOE/NJDOE guidance at the time.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services. (1000 character limit)

A full continuum of services will be in place for all students to ensure continuity. Collaboration with staff and parents will address that students are being provided with supports that will meet their academic and social emotional needs, with a prime focus on their overall well being. Procedures will be in place to support the whole child through a multi-tiered approach. Counseling, screening and services will be offered. A tiered level approach will be used to address academic, social, and emotional needs. Instruction through the use of a variety of techniques will be implemented to positively support students' mental health and academic growth. Mindfulness activities, specifically through morning meetings will be conducted and staff will be trained in this area. The I&RS teams will utilize a collection of data and information to identify, screen, problem solve, engage, and make decisions to positively promote student success. The district will hire an additional school social worker and intervention coach to support all students and staff in a variety of ways that target strategies and supports. Through various assessment tools, the district will be able to monitor student progress and use tools to remediate instruction as needed. Ongoing evaluation of these supports will be in place to ensure continuity of services for each student. The district will also ensure that SPED, ELL, and BSI students programs will be followed accordingly and that all students will receive all entitled services as per their plan, including related services.

3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment into account in the development of its plan.

Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

The district posted the LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service on its website in both English and Spanish in advance of the Board Meeting on June 22, 2021. At that meeting, the Superintendent conducted a presentation outlining the plan and public comment was sought from attendees. Each revision will similarly be posted on the website in the two primary languages of the local population and presented at Board of Education meetings. Additionally, the June 22, 2021 BOE meeting was advertised as required both in the local newspaper and via the District's automated call system.

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practicable written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, will be orally translated for such a parent; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent. (1000 character limit)

Important documents will be provided in both English and Spanish, translated by an employee proficient in both languages. If needed, all students have access to Chromebooks and assistive technology, such as a screen reader, which can be installed to help families access and understand the plan. People who have questions are encouraged to ask questions in any format available to them: in person, by email, and at Board of Education meetings.