



WALL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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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.

Maintaining Health and Safety

1. 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 mask: (1000 character limit)
 - Due to the nature of a real-time pandemic response, the District must be in the position to pivot to mask implementation as required by executive orders. On August 6, Governor Murphy signed executive orders requiring the use of masks in K-12 schools. On February 7, Governor Murphy announced that the mask mandate for schools will be lifted effective March 7, and as such, the District announced on February 10 that a mask-optional practice will be implemented as a result of the improving health data; health data will continue to be monitored. New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and CDC guidance will be consulted as needed. Up until March 7, staff will refer students to nurses as needed to provide extra support with proper mask application. Disposable masks/face shields and KN95 masks will once again be available to staff and students, if needed. School nurses will still provide support to students and staff regarding the proper wearing of masks.
 - b. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) (1000 character limit)
 - Guidance from the CDC and NJDOH will be implemented to the greatest extent possible with respect to physical distancing. Social distancing markers and visual reminders will continue to be displayed throughout the school buildings. The staff will monitor, as needed, to reinforce social distancing protocols as required in hallways to remind students to maintain proper distance. Outdoor eating (lunch and snack in elementary grades) will be encouraged. Outdoor seating and/or tents will be available at schools.
 - c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (1000 character limit)
 - Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol are located at the entrance of all buildings, as well as instructional and common spaces. Protocols will be established in classes to promote routines for increased hand sanitizing and allow for breaks for handwashing. Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer to the maximum extent possible between classes. Review of respiratory etiquette will continue to take place in the classrooms. Teachers will be provided with instructional resources and visual aids that support self-hygiene practices for students, including protocols for handwashing, nose blowing, coughing, and sneezing. Protocols will be established in classes to promote routines for increased hand sanitizing and allow for breaks for handwashing. Throughout the District, some water fountains were removed and replaced with hand washing and sanitizing stations. Odorodox filtration systems located in nurse stations are maintained and inspected as needed.

- d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation (1000 character limit)
- The District instituted a more intensive cleaning procedure in 2020-2021, to continue in 2021-2022 as follows:
 - Water bottle filling stations were installed in every school; water fountain bubblers will not be used.
 - Each classroom and common area will be furnished with disinfectant wipes for student and staff use.
 - PPE provided and given to all staff members such as masks and face shields.
 - Additional disinfecting is completed at night as part of the daily cleaning.
 - Provide staff with reminders and best practices on the use of cleaning items for staff and students
 - The District hired an Engineer to provide a report to identify fresh air in buildings:
 - The report displayed where fresh air was being introduced into each room in the District.
 - District introduced fresh air into the spaces that did not provide fresh air.
 - MERV 13 filters were provided in the units that could accommodate the filters. MERV 13, MERV 10, & MERV 8 filters have been installed.
 - All filters are changed quarterly.
- e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments (1000 character limit)
- The District will collaborate with the Freehold Department of Health to contact trace for positive cases of COVID-19.
 - The building nurse, along with the school administration, will initiate and complete the contact tracing process.
 - Students or staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have had a household exposure, will be required to quarantine per guidelines.
 - Quarantine/isolation recommendations and guidelines may be changed per the recommendation of the CHOP, NJDOH, and CDC.
 - Seating charts will be maintained and updated for classroom, lunch/snack breaks, and the bus for contact tracing purposes.
- f. Diagnostic and screening testing (1000 character limit)
- The District does not plan to implement a COVID-19 testing protocol within the schools. School nurses will assist families with locating testing centers. This information will also be provided on the District website. Parents are expected to screen their children for COVID-like symptoms each day before arriving at school. Staff will be expected to self-assess for COVID-like symptoms prior to their arrival at school. Unvaccinated staff or those not willing to disclose vaccination status are required to participate in weekly testing pursuant to Executive Order 253.

- g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible (1000 character limit)
- There is no plan at the District level to require vaccinations, however, all eligible and interested students/families of students 5 and 12 and older have access to resources via the District website and support from their respective school's nurse.
- h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies (1000 character limit)
- Mask wearing can be difficult for certain children with disabilities, therefore accommodations will be provided according to the student's particular need and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
 - Alternative personal protective equipment will be provided, such as face shields and plexiglass barriers and/or additional distancing.
 - Staff are offered additional protective equipment such as a face shield and/or K95 mask when caring for students who are unable to tolerate a face mask.
 - Visual cues and picture schedules can assist in creating a class procedure or schedule for hygiene measures such as handwashing.
 - Clear face coverings are available for students who rely on speech reading.

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).

The District will ensure continuity of services by providing support to students and staff in preparation for a smooth and successful transition for the September 2021 school opening. Services include:

- Provide academic support for all students, K-12, in all subgroups, through extended school year, after school, and tutoring services.
- Provide professional development in acquiring student learning loss and addressing student needs.
- Refine the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) process in identifying students, and creating, implementing and monitoring best practices for student learning, and providing time for our I&RS and Data Teams to collaborate and analyze data in making recommendations for change.
- Provide counseling, and social and emotional learning by securing additional contact time for nursing and counseling services, providing professional development, and re-examining instructional practices.
- Address staff needs by researching and providing best practices to support mental health and return to school concerns.

Public Comment

B. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments into account in the development of its plan. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

- The first draft of the plan was distributed to the stakeholders committee to include special education and general education teachers, supervisors, operations personnel, principals, assistant principals, central office personnel, and parents on June 8, 2021. Comments were noted and the plan was revised.
- The revised plan was placed on the Board of Education agenda and posted on the District website on June 11, 2021 for public review in preparation for the June 15, 2021 Board meeting.
- The Superintendent presented the plan to the public at the Board meeting on June 15, 2021, public comments were noted.
- The plan was placed on the District website subsequent to the Board meeting, for review with a Google platform for public comment.
- Comments were compiled and shared with the stakeholders committee held on June 21, 2021, for review, taking comments in consideration.
- The plan was revised, submitted, and placed on the District website on June 24, 2021, with a summary of public comment.
- The stakeholders committee held on August 17, 2021, reviewed the existing plan and made recommendations.
- The Superintendent presented the plan to the public at the Board meeting on August 24, 2021, public comments were noted.
- The stakeholders committee held on February 1, 2022, reviewed the existing plan and made recommendations.
- The Interim Assistant Superintendent presented the plan to the public at the Board meeting on February 15, 2022, public comments were noted.

C. 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)

The plan is written in an understandable and uniform format. The District provides a translator to a parent with a limited English proficiency and an alternative format accessible to a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA.

D. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools.

The District will provide professional development in social and emotional learning, identifying and supporting learning loss, refining the I&RS processes and best practices, addressing retention strategies, and augmenting technology tools and support for increased communication and collaboration with students and staff.

E. Provide a current link to the District's website where the plan is posted.

https://www.wall.k12.nj.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=457314&type=d&termREC_ID=&pREC_ID=945330