



## 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. The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and CDC guidance will be consulted as required. Masks will be recommended in the following circumstances:

1. When illness occurs in school-students or staff who become ill with symptoms consistent with Covid-19 while in school should wear a mask until they leave the premises.
2. After returning from isolation-students and staff who return to school during days 6-10 of isolation.
3. In the event of an outbreak-during an outbreak we will consult with the LHD. If students and staff choose to wear masks, the district will continue to provide verbal and visual reminders explaining proper mask wearing.

- 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.

- 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. The district will continue to implement appropriate handwashing and respiratory protocols such as encouraging students and staff to wash hands as frequently as possible, and self hygiene practices for sneezing, coughing and nose blowing.

- d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation (1000 character limit)

The District will continue to disinfect classrooms and common areas, use water filling stations in every school, provide PPE for staff members who wish to use it, and use MERV 13, MERV 10, and MERV 8 filters.

- e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments (1000 character limit)

The school nurse, along with the school administration, will initiate and complete contact tracing when needed.

- f. Diagnostic and screening testing (1000 character limit)

The District will not implement a COVID-19 testing protocol within the schools. School nurses will assist families with locating testing centers. Parents are expected to screen their students for symptoms each day before arriving at school. Staff will be expected to self-assess for symptoms prior to their arrival at school.

- g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible (1000 character limit)

All staff and eligible and interested students/families 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)

- If needed, alternative personal protective equipment will be provided, such as face shields and plexiglass barriers and/or additional distancing.
- 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 2022 school opening. Services will include:

- Implementation of all District curriculum and programs.
- Provide academic support for all students, K-12, in all subgroups, through extended school year, after school, and tutoring services.
- The Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) process in identifying students, and creating, implementing and monitoring best practices for student learning.
- Counseling, and social and emotional learning by securing additional contact time for nursing and counseling services.
- Supporting staff with mental health.

## 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 revised plan was placed on the Board of Education agenda and posted on the District website on August 19, 2022 for public review in preparation for the August 23, 2022 Board meeting. The Superintendent presented the plan to the public at the Board meeting and public comments were noted. The plan was revised, submitted, and placed on the District website on August 24, 2022, with a summary of public comment.

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 continue to 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.

Safe Return Plan