

American Rescue Plan Safe Return Plan (ARP ESSER)

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the Federal American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund, Public Law 117-2, into law. ARP ESSER provides an additional \$122 billion to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impact 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 impact of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families.

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. Even though we have had in-person instruction since September 2020, we are still required to complete this template in order to receive funding. This plan is a fluid document as we do not have complete and final guidance from the state. This plan is developed under the current guidelines (as of 6/14) and will be modified as new guidance is provided.

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

1) Universal and correct wearing of masks

As of this writing, face masks remain mandatory for K-12 schools, based on CDC guidance. Students will be educated on the proper manner of mask-wearing. They will be reminded and directed to wear their masks appropriately when necessary. Signs will be placed through school reminding all about proper mask-wear. Accommodations for heat, outdoor activities and vaccinated individuals will follow CDC, NJDOH.

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

Students will have staggered entrance times and will be entering at separate doors. Students desks will be spaced according to CDC/DOH guidelines where applicable and attainable. Other modifications will include using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction, and assigned seating.

3) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Students will be educated on the proper manner of handwashing and respiratory etiquette. They will be reminded and directed to cover any coughs/sneezes completely when necessary. Signs will be placed in appropriate areas reminding all about proper handwashing techniques. Every room has sanitation stations and handwashing breaks will be implemented throughout the day.

4) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Classrooms will be disinfected and sanitized while the students are at lunch/recess and again after school hours. Hallways, bathrooms, and the lunchroom will be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected nightly. All ventilation units will be maintained, and upgraded as well the exhaust system. Both ventilation and exhaust system will be monitored daily and maintained if necessary.

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

The school nurse and school administration will conduct contact tracing when necessary. Students displaying symptoms (as per CDC/DOH) will be quarantined in our isolated chamber until pick up. They will not return to school until they have tested negative for the COVID virus.

6) Diagnostic and screening testing

The school has applied to be a testing facility. If our application is accepted, we will test students/staff that complain/display symptoms. Student temperatures will be taken before they enter the building.

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

The district has worked with the county superintendent and the local DOH to provide information on where and how to get vaccinated. This information has been disseminated through internal emails, and the school facebook.

8) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.

All appropriate accommodations will be addressed and provided for all students. All IEP's and 504's plans will be followed. A virtual educational plan has been developed in case students are in need of virtual instruction (as mandated by a licenced physician).