



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.

EPTSD Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Edgewater Park Township

Date: 06/22/2021

Date Revised: 8/23/22

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. Wearing of masks - In the absence of a mask mandate, face masks are optional for all students and staff in school buildings. Students must wear a mask upon entering and while riding the school bus while the federal mandate is in place. If they do not have a mask for the bus, one will be provided. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) - All students maintain 3 feet of social distance, to the greatest extent practicable. Staff are required to maintain 6 feet of social distance in the classroom, to the greatest extent practicable. Students are placed in cohorts during lunch and physical education. Additional guidance is provided by BOE Policy 1648. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the county health department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our district protocols.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette - Hand sanitizing stations have been set up at the entry point of each school. All classrooms are equipped with hand sanitizer. Additionally, hand sanitizing stations are provided outside at each playground. Students are required to use the hand sanitizer before and after use of any playground equipment as well as before and after physical education class. Hand washing is required before and after eating. Students and staff are reminded to always cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Additional guidance provided in BOE Policy 1648. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation - All classrooms, offices, and large areas in each building have been equipped with enhanced air filtration to the greatest extent practicable. Additionally, each classroom is cleaned nightly with a disinfectant. Custodial staff provide additional cleaning in bathrooms and high-touch areas whenever possible. High-touch areas in buses are sanitized between runs. Buses are cleaned daily with a disinfectant. Additional guidance provided in BOE Policy 1648. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments - Teachers should update seating charts when needed. Additional guidance provided in BOE Policy 1648. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

Although the District cannot substitute its judgment for that of experts in the field of infectious diseases when it comes to preventing the spread of COVID-19, the District also has a strong interest in continuing to provide full-time, in-person instruction to its students. Accordingly, that interest will also be taken into account when updating the District's isolation and quarantine policies, which, at times, may deviate from the most current NJDOH and/or CDC recommendations or guidance, as authorized by N.J.S.A. 26:4-6. (this paragraph added on 1/25/22)

F. Diagnostic and screening testing - Parents will be required to sign a COVID compact, attesting that they will screen their children daily for symptoms of COVID-19. Any student or staff displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be sent directly to the nurse for screening and placed in an isolation area if COVID symptoms are observed by the nurse. PCR, Rapid, or Home COVID tests will be accepted in determining positive or negative results, provided that test results are submitted to the school nurse. Home test results must include the child's name and the date of the test in the photograph. Additional guidance provided in BOE Policy 1648. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible - All staff were provided the opportunity to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. Additionally, all students eligible at the time were provided the opportunity to be vaccinated at local sites. The District has and will continue to provide information to the school community regarding local vaccination opportunities. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies - Students with disabilities are governed by the IEP. Pursuant to BOE Policy 1648, accommodations are provided for students who require additional safety measures, such as the inability to wear a face mask, for example. Alternative PPE is provided for the student or an exception is made for a student, when appropriate. Respective staff are provided additional PPE to further support their health and safety. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the County Health Department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our District protocols.

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)

All students are eligible to attend in person 5 days a week. Academic interventions will be provided for students in need of additional support. Appropriate revisions to the instructional framework will enable teachers to provide targeted and direct instruction individually and in small groups. An Extended School Year (ESY) program will be implemented. A summer learning acceleration program was created to support students with learning gaps. Teachers collaborated to effectively identify students in need of additional support. An additional school counselor position has been added to the elementary school for mental health support.

Professional learning opportunities will continue in accordance with the current District Professional Development Plan. Technical assistance will be provided through the contracted IT company (PitBull) with oversight from the Supervisor of Technology and other administrators. Technical assistance will be tailored to meet the individual needs of teachers and staff.

Students in quarantine will have digital access to asynchronous instruction. Homebound instruction and livestream access may be considered if warranted.

3. Public Comment

A. 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 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

A draft of the plan was shared digitally with the public and community members were encouraged to complete an online survey to offer feedback and suggestions. At the Board of Education meeting on January 23, 2023, opportunity was given for public comment on the plan.

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)

The final version of the plan will be translated into Spanish, Turkish, and Portuguese and posted on the District website.

EPTSD Safe Reopening Plan Addendum - Health & Safety Protocols

Approved on 6/20/23

The Health & Safety Protocols on this addendum apply in addition to previously implemented protocols. Whenever practicable, the District's Health & Safety Protocols will align with NJDOH recommendations, while prioritizing in-person instruction.

Masks

- The mask mandate for indoor settings expired on March 7, 2022.

Sports and Other Activities

- When the COVID-19 risk level of community transmission is Very High (RED), the district will consider a pause in all sports and activities that involve increased exhalation (band, choir, drama). Academics-based after-school activities and those that do not involve increased exhalation will continue with masks and safe distancing practices. This decision will be revisited when the region returns to the orange level of transmission.

Exclusion

The NJDOH recommends that individuals with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; OR
- At least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.

EPTSD Isolation protocols for all persons who test positive for COVID-19:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days after the onset of symptoms or if asymptomatic after the positive test (day of symptoms is day 0; if asymptomatic, day the test was performed is day 0). Individuals can return to school on day 6 if masked through day 10.
- Symptomatic individuals may return to school with a negative test result, if fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine and improved symptoms.

EPTSD Quarantine protocols for exposed individuals/close contacts:

- Unvaccinated Siblings/Household members of positive cases will isolate for 5 days and mask for 5 days upon return to school with a negative test taken on day 6.

Board of Education Approval Dates:

June 22, 2021 January 4, 2022 January 25, 2022 February 22, 2022 March 22, 2022 August 23, 2022	January 23, 2023 June 20, 2023 October 17, 2023 June 25, 2024	
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