



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: Perth Amboy Public Schools

Date (06/23/2021):

Date Revised (01/24/2022):

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

All students were provided with two masks upon their return to school in September 2021. While students are encouraged to wear their own masks, the district is continuously prepared to provide masks to staff, students, and visitors, if necessary. Students, staff, and visitors are expected to wear masks while in school and throughout the entire school day while they are inside the school building except as delineated in Executive Order 251. All bus students must wear masks while on the buses. Masks may be removed to eat lunch but are encouraged to be worn even with outdoor activities as per the guidance from the NJ Department of Health. The district will continue to strictly follow and enforce CDC and the New Jersey Department of Education guidelines regarding the use of masks in schools and make adjustments as recommended in collaboration with stakeholders.

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

In spring 2021, the Governor's office mandated that there will be no option for remote instruction for the 2021-2022 SY unless students/staff were COVID exposed or tested positive. In strictly following that mandate, the district prepared to bring all of the students and staff back to school in the safest manner possible. Desks are placed in rows to maintain three feet of distance to the greatest extent possible. Signage in schools allows students to move in an organized fashion in the hallways, lunchroom, and in/out of media centers/gymnasiums/auditoriums. On buses, students sit with as much physical distance as possible. During all classes including lunch, seating charts have been created to ascertain the proximity of students in case there is a need for contact tracing. The District will continue to review the most current recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education and the

CDC and make adjustments as needed in collaboration with stakeholders. Students and staff will keep 3 feet of distance outside, inside buildings, and on buses, as much as possible.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette are accomplished through teaching and modeling techniques. Every classroom throughout the district has been fitted with a "pump" hand sanitizer machine or a battery-powered hand sanitizer that self-pumps. At the elementary level, the allotted time is given for students and staff to wash their hands before and after a mid-morning snack is provided. Each classroom has also been provided with a tri-fold Plexi-shield that allows a teacher closer proximity to a student to conduct one-to-one instruction while ensuring proper respiratory etiquette. The District will continue to review the most current recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education and the CDC and make adjustments as recommended in collaboration with stakeholders.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The District has purchased air purification systems for every classroom and office whose ventilation system was only supported by a "window unit" air conditioning system. Additional purification systems were provided in classrooms/offices that exceeded 200 square feet of space. In addition, HVAC filter changes will continue to take place regularly and as needed. Where applicable, all HVAC units will be upgraded to the manufactures highest recommended MERV filters. There will be heightened monitoring of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems for proper operation. Electrostatic sprayers are used to clean all classrooms, offices, and bathrooms daily and all bathrooms are cleaned using electrostatic sprayers on a 20-30-minute rotating schedule prepared by every head custodian. The district will continue to assess and monitor each school building's systems to improve ventilation and to promote a safe learning environment for all students and staff.

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

In collaboration with the Middlesex County Health Department, the District's Human Resource Department, and the Nurse Supervisor, contact tracing protocols for students/staff have been established utilizing the NJ Department of Health and CDC guidelines. These protocols were shared with all nurses and building administrators to be enforced beginning September 2021. A medical support team is in place to ensure all contact tracing calls are made for close contacts as soon as we have documentation of a student/staff being positive. Each building is fitted with an isolation room where students/staff who may demonstrate symptoms of COVID-19 can safely wait for a parent/guardian to pick them up. A concerted effort will be made to ensure that the isolation rooms do not overlap with the nurse's office to keep the nurse's office a safe space for students/staff who need to visit for non-covid related reasons. The District will continue to follow current CDC guidelines and NJDOE mandates.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

At the start of the school year, temperature scans were no longer utilized on a daily basis for staff and students as temperature screening. Accordingly, staff and students are not screened. However, we continue to temperature screen parents and visitors upon entry to any district building. We ask families to screen their children at home and not send in students that are showing signs of illness. In addition, staff are asked to monitor their own health and not come to school if they are not feeling well. Staff members that are not vaccinated must provide a negative test on a weekly basis. The district has contracted with a health provider to administer PCR tests for all staff members. The District will continue to review the most current recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education and the CDC and make adjustments as recommended in collaboration with stakeholders.

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

In March 2021, the Perth Amboy Public School district partnered with the city of Perth Amboy to coordinate vaccination opportunities for its staff. The District is proud to say that because of the joint effort, almost 400 staff members took advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated at Hackensack Meridian Hospital located in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Several other staff were also vaccinated using other vaccination centers. The district provided accommodations for all staff who chose to go to other facilities. Students who met the age requirement for vaccination have also been given the opportunity to get vaccinated at the same location without an appointment. All schools have posted this information on their website. All educators, other staff, and students are encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

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

All appropriate accommodations are provided for students with disabilities. The district ensures that buses are prepared in a manner that promotes the wearing of masks and social distancing, if possible, when transporting students with disabilities to buildings either within the district or to out-of-district facilities. All classrooms that have multiple instructors and/or paraprofessionals are equipped with additional plexiglass barriers and staff are provided with face shields to wear over their face masks in order to ensure appropriate respiratory etiquette. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and appropriate staff are provided with clear view face masks. The District will continue to collaborate with families and conduct IEP meetings to provide appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities in alignment with health and safety policies. Students with disabilities will continue to receive special education and related services, in accordance with the IEP.

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)

The district began instruction in September with 100% of students engaged in in-person learning. Addressing the learning loss that inevitably took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic is a priority to the district. The district has extended the school day via before/after school programs and the school year via summer programs to address core content areas with a primary focus on mitigating learning loss. The district is data-driven when identifying students. Programs have been developed to meet the needs of general education students, Special Education Students, and English Language Learners. Special attention has been given to students in grades 9-12 to assist with credit recovery and alternative assessments as well as grades K-4 with using Leveled Literacy Intervention Instruction. The district will also continue to utilize RTI strategies during the fabric of the school day. Counselors will work with small groups of students who have been identified as needing SEL support.

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)

The District sought public comment on its plan by creating a district-wide committee that includes representation from diverse stakeholders from within and outside the district. The committee will meet to review the plan and gather questions, concerns, recommendations, and any other type of feedback intended to continue an open line of communication and enhance the district's safe return plan as we navigate through this pandemic.

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 plan will be translated into Spanish to meet the language needs of parents and community members. If any other parent needs additional or different accommodations to access the plan, those accommodations will be provided.

4. Professional Learning and Technical Assistance Opportunities

Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (999 of 1000 maximum characters used)

During the 21-22 school year, the district has provided professional development for staff and schools in the areas of Social Justice, Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning to assist our students and our staff in their transition back to in-person instruction. The intent is to assist staff in supporting our students' social emotional response to the pandemic and the return to the school setting by incorporating SEL in all of the content areas. Students have the opportunity to express themselves through academic learning. Students/staff have participated in assemblies/PD with inspirational speakers that are well-known in the area of SEL. If necessary, we have district-wide systems in place for virtual professional development. When we need to pivot

to remote, teachers have access to a "remote learning help desk" that provides them with technology support on a daily and as needed basis. There are also dedicated systems in place to support the technical needs of our parents/students.