



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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: River Edge Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): June 17, 2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): June 16, 2023

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

- School staff and visitors are not required to wear face coverings in the buildings
- If a school staff or visitor is recovering from Covid and on days 6-10 of that time period, they are encouraged to wear a mask unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age
 - **MUST** be well fitting
 - Cover the nose and mouth
 - Loop around the ears or the back of the head
 - **SHOULD NOT** contain a valve or scarf-like (gaiters)

- Accommodation for students/staff who are unable to wear a face covering should be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Exceptions
 - The student is under the age of two (2) and could risk suffocation
 - When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors
 - When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance
 - When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering
 - When the individual is under two (2) years of age
 - When an individual is engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering
 - When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity
 - When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task ([NJDOH, 2021](#))

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

- Students are not required to physically distance.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- **Hand Sanitizing Stations in Buildings**
 - Each classroom will have a hand sanitizing station with alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
 - Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances and exits of buildings, near lunch rooms and bathrooms
- **Handwashing**
 - Students/staff will wash their hands for at least 20 second intervals using soap and water, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible

- **Respiratory Etiquette**

- Face coverings are encouraged for anyone with a respiratory infection or cold symptoms.
- Cough/ sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your elbow (display posters)

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- Facilities are cleaned frequently throughout the day. In classrooms with several infections, areas are sanitized in the evening.
- Ventilation
 - Re-circulated air with a fresh air component enters the room through the HVAC system and flow was verified with HVAC company
 - Windows can be open although all areas have air conditioning
 - Air conditioner filters are changed frequently on all units
 - Air Purifiers were purchased for highly occupied areas and filters were changed
 - BiPolar Ionization Units were purchased and installed on the roof top units in the buildings

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

What is the definition of close contact?

- Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 without a mask for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period.
 - Exception per the Road Forward Plan: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within three to six feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

How is contact tracing conducted?

- Contact tracing is not currently conducted

What is the quarantine policy for the 2022-2023 school year?

- Quarantine timeline is based upon the positive test date and/or the start of symptoms
- In all cases, it is essential to monitor yourself for symptoms. Do not attend school if you have any symptoms
- Exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 5 days. Staff and students who are fully vaccinated and/or clinically recovered within 90 days do not need to quarantine

- Proof of vaccination for staff and students should be submitted

If a student must quarantine, how can they participate in their classes?

- Students will have access to a Google Classroom

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Staff Self-Monitoring for COVID-19 signs and symptoms
 - Staff will be encouraged to stay home when they are sick
- Parent/ Guardian Monitoring of children for COVID-19 signs and/or symptoms
 - Parents will monitor for temperature, signs and symptoms of COVID-19 with their children. Parents are encouraged to keep their children home when they are sick

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

- Several staff members (teachers, administrators, nurses, paraprofessionals, office staff, custodians) did receive vaccinations through the opportunities organized by the Bergen County Executive Superintendent and the BCEA
- Nurses will organize a Fall Flu vaccination clinic with a local pharmacy for the faculty/staff

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

- Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering should be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Exceptions
 - Doing so would inhibit the individual's health
 - A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of face covering

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)

- **Schedules**
 - All students, Grades K-6 will attend school daily from 8:25 am to 3:00 pm. Pre-K students will follow their regular schedule
- **Lunch**
 - We will utilize lunchrooms & outside for lunch
- **Social, Emotional, & Mental Health Needs**
 - Responsive Classroom will be implemented in all classes, Pre-K-6
 - Pupil Assistance Counselors & Mental Health Clinicians will provide support as needed
 - Professional Development will focus on specific needs of staff & students
- **Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment**
 - Interactive instruction in all content areas will take place for Grades Pre-K-6
 - Various assessments will be used to determine student progress & to differentiate instruction
 - Our W.I.N. - What I Need Program, C.R.E.A.T.E - Gifted & Talented Program, and P.D.I.A. - Post Dismissal Instructional Academy will continue
- **Delivery of Special Education & Related Services to Students with Disabilities**
 - Special Education & Related Services will be offered according to student Individualized Education Plans
- **Addressing ELL & Bilingual Needs**
 - Pull-out & push-in services will be offered for English Language Learners, as well as a Newcomer/English support period

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)

- No applicable

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 is written in a clear format that is familiar to our stakeholders.
- The Plan is posted on the homepage of the district's website.
- If a request is made for an alternative format, that request will be granted.

BOE approval June 28, 2023