



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: Berkeley Heights Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/15/21

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

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:

According to the Restart and Recovery Plan:

School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age.

If a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual at the point of entry, the visitor's entry to the school/district facility may be denied.

Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and are required to do so when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.

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

Physical Distancing in Classrooms:

- **Elementary Schools (Low, Moderate, and High-Risk Transmission Levels):**
 - Recommend full in person instruction with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students maintained in classrooms with strict adherence to mask wearing.
- **Middle/High School (Low and Moderate Risk Transmission Levels):**
 - Recommend full in person instruction with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students maintained in classrooms with strict adherence to mask wearing.
- **Middle/High Schools (High-Risk Transmission Levels):**
 - While in High-Risk Level, consider in person instruction if able to maximize physical distancing between students of six feet or more. Recommend 6 feet of physical distancing between students to the maximum extent practicable with strict adherence to mask-wearing.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

The district will follow all CDC guidelines that are appropriate at the time of reopening on September 21.

Our full plan is [here](#).

The current DOH guidelines are [here](#).

The district is upgrading its ventilation procedures, windows will be open when necessary.

Students will be required to sanitize their hands regularly throughout the day, especially before and after lunch.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

- Class sizes are determined based on policy and space availability.
- Hand sanitizer stations are installed.
- Windows will be open when feasible to allow for greater circulation.
- Cleaning protocols will be continued.
- Fans and ventilation devices are being upgraded.
- Please see our more detailed plan [here](#).

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

We will follow all of the CDC and DOH guidelines that are in place as of Sept. 21.

Our more detailed plan is [here](#).

The current DOH guidelines are [here](#).

Contact Tracing:

- a. Upon notification that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will call the school district to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus, where close contact is defined as being within six feet for a period of at least ten minutes.
- b. The school district shall assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.
- c. The school district shall ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.
- d. A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee and shall be responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.
- e. School districts shall allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

- Individualized needs of students and programs will be considered to ensure all of the components of the IEP are addressed.
- Depending on the district plan in place and the details of the executive order at the time, some students may receive extended programming in the afternoon.
- Related services will be provided in both a remote and in-person format in any plan that includes in-person instruction.
- Meetings will be conducted in person; meetings held virtually or via phone at parent request only.

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

We will work with Atlantic Health and the local DOH to provide vaccines to our staff and students.

We will work with our parent volunteers who have helped us in the past to secure vaccinations for our students and staff.

We have had local parents who have scheduled vaccinations for all of our staff members. We have partnered with Atlantic Health to provide vaccines for our students.

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

The District will implement all pertinent protocols, procedures and statutes that are in effect at the time.

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)

Our more detailed plan is [here](#). District will implement protocols and procedures from the CDC/NJDOH/NJDOE that are in effect at the time. The District will continue to update the community should the guidance change. The link above provides details on food service, provides for the social-emotional needs of the students and staff, and addresses students' academic needs, including a plan to address learning loss. Please see this [document](#) for our full Social Emotional Learning framework for K-12.

3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment 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)

All of our plans have been created with community, staff, stakeholder input. The plan has been created in partnership with three different pandemic committees (School-based, District-based, Community-based) that represent stakeholders throughout the community. Additionally, the District has continued to engage the entire community throughout the pandemic through correspondence, surveys, Board meetings, and televised updates. The District plan also provides an additional opportunity for parents to provide feedback through a google form. The detailed plan was sent to families to receive feedback. You can find the link [here](#).

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 posted to our website which provides an opportunity for parents to be able to translate the document into a language of their choice. Upon request, we will make the necessary accommodations so that all parents / guardians are able to access the document and assist as necessary.