



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: Little Falls Township Public Schools

Date: (06/18/2021)

Date Revised 08/11/2021, 02/11/2022

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

According to the Governor's executive order 251, effective August 9, 2021 all NJ students, staff, and visitors must wear facemasks inside all schools buildings regardless of vaccination status. If student has an illness that precludes them from wearing a face mask and medical or IEP documentation has been provided, they can use a face shield or take their mask off while seated behind a desk shield.

Accommodations will be made for extreme heat including outdoor activities & mask breaks. Little Falls Township Public Schools will continue to follow the CDC and NJDOH guidelines. Disposable face masks will be available for distribution as needed. As of March 7, 2022 per the Governor masks are optional for schools and the plan will be updated once guidance is received.

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

There will be social distancing in instructional and non-instructional rooms to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Students will be separated a minimum of 3 feet and desk shields will be placed in learning areas upon request. Coatrooms and cubbies will not be used. Physical barriers will be placed on all cafeteria tables. Students will be placed in hives and each hive will have its own: entry, exit, bathrooms and water filling station.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Hand Sanitizing Stations will be in each room. Everyone will use hand sanitizer upon entering the building and entering their classroom. Where classroom sinks are available, hands must be washed upon entering the classroom for a minimum of 20 seconds. Hands must be washed for a minimum of 20 seconds after sneezing, blowing nose or coughing as well as before and after snack, recess and before leaving for the day.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Routine cleaning and disinfection: Night custodial staff will begin their shift earlier (20 minutes prior to the instructional school day ending), providing assistance for routine cleaning and disinfecting in addition to routine cleaning and disinfecting will occur throughout the day. Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects/surfaces: 4 times a day all communal frequently touched objects/surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected Handrails, door handles and push plates, hallway light switches, water filling stations and elevator buttons. At the completion of each instructional school day all classrooms, hallways, offices, telephones, desktops, floors, shared areas and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized and BruTab sanitizing sprayer will be utilized daily and more frequently as needed. Bathrooms will be cleaned every hour. District Custodial Procedure Manual details facility cleaning checklist and cleaning products.

HVAC Upgrades:

- i. Appropriate MERV filters 7-13 have been purchased and installed
- ii. All filters will be checked regularly to ensure they are operating efficiently and drawing in the required amount of fresh air.
- iii. Staff will be trained during the first days of school on air protocols i.e. windows, HVAC settings, air conditioners...
- iv. Three ActivePure Technology systems have been purchased to purify air
- v. Needlepoint ionization has been installed in all buildings

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

Students and Staff will be visually checked for symptoms upon entering the building. COVID affirmation for students and parents was on Realtime in September of 2021. There is an isolation space within each health office and an outdoor area. If symptoms are present, the school nurse will use discretion in conjunction with Clifton Health Department where necessary to determine if student is released from school.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

In the affirmation parents agree to self-report symptoms. Staff also was informed to self-report symptoms. Once those are reported to the nurse, contact tracing is taken from that point to determine proper steps.

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

In order to provide eligible staff, students and community members with vaccine we have provided release time for staff to receive their COVID-19 vaccine, and worked cooperatively with the Clifton Health Department. We continue to distribute information about vaccine availability through Passaic County.

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

a. Protocol for High Risk Students

- i. Medical Documentation Required - If student has an illness that precludes them from wearing a face mask they can:
 - 1. Use a face shield instead of mask
 - 2. Take mask off while seated behind desk shield
 - 3. Child Study Team can work with families to determine the appropriate PPE and the district will provide
- ii. School counselors, behaviorist, and psychologist provide resources and interventions as necessary

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).

During the 2021-2022 school year, we have been operating on 5 days a week with full day instruction. We have altered the schedules to include a rolling drop off period that provides multiple access points of entry (assigned by hive) as well as less congestion at each school site. SEL will continue to be fostered with Ms. Alisha DeLorenzo providing student and staff supports. An additional School Psychologist has been hired to assist with the growing number of referrals. Multi-tiered systems will remain in place. Boost sessions are offered after school for students in need of academic support. I&RS meetings and supports continue to be in place for students identified as socially, emotionally, and/or academically at-risk. Gifted Talented sessions, programs, and competitions will continue. Lunch is served during assigned lunch periods and breakfast is offered every morning as well. The aftercare program started in September of 2021 and before care started in December of 2021. The 2021-2022 school year will continue 5 day a week full day instruction. We have altered the schedules to include a rolling drop off period that provide multiple access points of entry (assigned by hive) as well as less congestion at each school site. There will be opportunities for students to participate in additional academic support, homework assistance, seasonal activities, physical activity, and other coordinated events. Ultimately, the district will monitor NJDOE and NJDOH recommendations for social distancing and other best practice to identify facility needs.

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)

The Safe Return Plan had limited changes throughout the year and was open for public comment in our January 18th Board Meeting. No feedback was given. The superintendent sends letters with any updates and changes when they occur. These letters are posted on the website. The Superintendent also holds Talk a Latte sessions for the public on a regular basis which is an open forum for feedback.

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 Safe Return Plan is posted on our district and school webpages. Our website is ADA compliant and also allows for easy translation to the native language of our community members. The website will also direct families and community members with ways to receive additional assistance. These will include contacting our Business Administrator, principals, Buildings and Grounds Manager, and/or Superintendent of Schools.