



## 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**

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**LEA Name: Westampton Township Public Schools**

**Date - 06/15/2021**

**Date Revised - 06/15/2021**

### **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

While we anticipate the absence of the need for masking in any school area in September, 2021, the school district will comply with the current BCHD interpretation of NJDOH and NJDOE guidance, which often references directly the CDC guidance, for the use of masks as a mitigating factor in controlling the spread of Covid-19. We will update our plan as such guidance changes. Given the authority to make the decision locally, Westampton Township will be a mask-optional environment in 2021-2022.

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

While we anticipate the reduced need for physical distancing in all school areas in September, 2021, the school district will comply with the current BCHD interpretation of NJDOH and NJDOE guidance, which often references directly the CDC guidance, for the use of masks as a mitigating factor in controlling the spread of Covid-19. We will update our plan as such guidance changes. We are planning for appropriate spacing of desks, strategic

movement in hallways, and enhanced student movement protocols (i.e. locker visit times, bathroom times, etc.) to address this need. We anticipate no need for cohorts or podding in September, 2021 but will comply with the appropriate directives as they present themselves.

#### C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

As we have learned during the pandemic, handwashing and respiratory etiquette benefit the health of students, staff, and the community as a whole regardless of the existence of Covid-19. We battle every year with a "stomach bug", strep throat, colds, and other respiratory and transmissible sicknesses that will be positively impacted with a continued emphasis on handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette strategies and enhanced opportunities will continue to be taught and encouraged throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

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

We have added to and enhanced our cleaning protocols since March 2020 to include regular disinfecting of "high touch" areas, the addition of equipment to thoroughly disinfect classrooms, offices, and other areas where students and staff congregate. Drinking fountains will remain closed but we will continue to operate water dispensing fountains for water bottles. Disinfectant wipes are available in every classroom as well as hand sanitizer in every classroom and common area. We have minimized visitor contact with school personnel. We have taken regular measures to inform the school community of the signs and symptoms of infection and have enforced appropriate rules for containing any concern of possible transmission. All of these protocols will remain in place with the exception of the "daily check" which will likely be replaced with regular reminders, as all parents are now fully aware of both the symptoms and the dangers of sending their child to school ill. Short term ventilation remediation will be supported with regular maintenance of new equipment purchased to supplement our HVAC systems with HEPA filtering and air ionization. Long term remediation is being addressed in our Long Term Facilities Plan.

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

We have established an exceptional relationship with our local Health Department who will continue to regularly consult with our school nurses when contact tracing, isolation, and/or quarantining is required. Our school nurses are all trained in Contact Tracing and are fluent in quarantining requirements.

#### F. Diagnostic and screening testing

We will provide for a detailed review of symptoms to be "on the lookout for" for parents/guardians that we recommend for every student before departing for school. We will continue to rely on family responsibility in determining if a student should not attend school on a particular day. Our school nurses are always available to consult with a parent or guardian who is unsure. Upon arrival to school, protocols will be in place for students or staff to report someone not feeling well to our school office and school nurse. Protocols are in place to isolate any potential concern for transmission. We will update our plan as the appropriate guidance changes.

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

We have partnered with neighboring districts, local pharmacies, and the "mega site" system to assist any staff member that wished to receive the Covid-19 vaccination. We have posted information for the community to our website to assist them in finding vaccination opportunities. At this time, very few of our students are eligible for vaccination, so we have not extended this assistance to students. We will update our plan as the appropriate guidance changes.

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

We will continue to use our current protocols of identification of any students needing accommodations with respect to health and safety. Students with known concerns have been identified by our school nurses who have consulted with parents. Parents or guardians with concerns that we are not aware of can contact their case manager (if they have one), school office, or school nurse and appropriate accommodations will be made.

## 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)

2021 and 2022 programs will be extended and enhanced to meet the needs of all students suffering from negative academic impact of lost instruction time. Summer programs will include transportation to ensure equity of access, extended programs to meet the needs of students outside of IEP mandated ESY, including other groups of IEP students and general education students identified through multiple measures. After-school and extended day programs have been and will be enhanced in a similar manner in the 2021-2022 school year. Additional staff, with specialties such as Reading Specialist, School Counselor, and Basic Skills Intervention Instructor will be added to ensure access for all students that need remediation. Additional measures will be taken to ensure that our gifted population can get/remain on track with their studies.

## 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)

Due to the small window between the plan request and the submission requirement, public comment will be an ongoing process. This is advantageous as revisions are both expected and required. As more guidance is provided to LEAs from the NJDOH and the NJDOE, public comment will be sought on any changes to the plan that guidance requires. We have made good use of parent surveys this year to gather information from parents, as well as regular communications from both the district and school offices. There has been regular discourse during the year. Board Meetings have been made both in-person and virtual, and anyone in the public participating virtually can still fully participate in public comment portions.

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)

We will promote this plan on our website and highlight its existence and an easy link to follow in future parent communications. Those communications go out over varied means including direct email, SMS texting messages, social media platforms, and our school app. Each of our departments (Homeless

Liaison, Special Education, LEP staff, etc.) as well as our school offices are familiar with families that need assistance in access to such documents and ensure that an appropriate format is available, when needed.