



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: Collingswood Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/24/2021

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

Per Executive Order No. 242, for indoor or outdoor activities and/or ceremonies no masks are required and capacity limits have been lifted; however social distancing should be observed at a minimum of 3 feet. Due to the unavailability of eligible students and staff's vaccination status and the lack of availability for vaccines for students under the age of 12, the district will continue to adhere to universal mask requirements in schools.

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

Whenever possible, elementary students will remain in cohorts throughout the school day with schedules established to reduce cohort mixing. Per current CDC guidance, the district will continue to implement several layers of prevention including physical distancing to the greatest extent possible and universal and correct wearing of masks.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Hand sanitizer machines have been installed in all elementary classrooms and in high-traffic common areas of each school. Hand sanitizer pumps will be available in all middle and high school classrooms for student and staff use. Hand washing stations are available in some elementary classrooms and all preschool classrooms. In elementary classrooms without handwashing stations, teachers will schedule time for handwashing during the school day. In secondary classrooms, hand pump sanitizer will be placed in each room for students to use upon entry.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The school district purchased COVID related materials with funding provided by the CARES Act. This includes personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning products, MERV-13 air filters to trap particles, and hydroxyl generators to disinfect possible contaminated areas. Throughout the school day custodial staff utilize electrostatic sprayers to clean high-touch areas and restrooms every 30 mins. All areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected on a nightly basis.

The district is adhering to HVAC guidelines set forth by the American Society of Heating Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating Engineers. All HVAC equipment is monitored daily to ensure systems are operating as designed for building occupancy. Current recommendations of maintaining indoor humidity levels between 40-60% are met. High efficiency filters have been installed in all units, and the district has increased unit run times to increase the amount of fresh air being provided to all areas within the buildings.

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

The Superintendent will work with the Camden County Department of Health (CCDOH) to establish protocols for communication, school community notification, and contact tracing. In partnership with Principals, School Nurses lead contact tracing efforts on campuses per continued guidance and technical assistance from the Camden County Department of Health.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

As a first line of defense, School Nurses will update the established self-check protocols for families and staff to implement at home prior to reporting to school. School Nurses will also use updated CDC guidance to create educational materials for families regarding signs of illness and the need to keep children home when sick. Principals will determine times and locations of entry to school buildings as well as a process for ensuring every staff member and student gets and passes a brief wellness check via a pre-established checklist to be updated prior to September. Nurses will train staff members charged with screenings.

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

Collingswood Public Schools partnered with Jefferson Health to provide educators and staff access to the COVID-19 vaccine in March and April. There has been continued emphasis on vaccination efforts for students and staff through weekly newsletters and special notices sent using the community messaging system. Eligible secondary students were surveyed in June and data indicates that 70% of middle and high school students will be fully vaccinated by September 2021. The school district is also in active partnership with the Collingswood Borough Pandemic Recovery Committee and the Camden County Department of Health to host a pop-up vaccine clinic at the high school campus for all Collingswood, Oaklyn, and Woodlynne residents age 12 and older in July and August 2021.

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

Child Study Team Case Managers will work with School Nurses to determine if a student with disabilities is unable to wear a mask and determine acceptable alternatives. The same process will be followed to determine what additional accommodations are needed with respect to other health and safety policies.

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 beginning of school will focus on relationships and routines. The Start Strong Assessment will be administered to students Grades 4-11. Collingswood Public Schools has requested to participate in the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment pilot program. At the early elementary level (Grades 1-3), units of study pre-assessments will be used to gauge where students are in their learning. At the secondary level, content assessments are embedded within units of study. Assessments will be administered after SEL connections are made in September.

The Child Study Team (CST) will work with district staff to determine what accommodations can be made to return medically fragile students to the district. The CST Case Managers and Teachers will review academic data and other IEP goals to determine what services are required to address any regression. The CST will continue evaluation processes in a collaborative manner, working closely with team members, families, and students.

B. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools.

Professional learning will focus on Trauma-informed Practices, Restorative Approaches to Learning, Social-emotional Learning (SEL), Equity at Work, Reading Workshop Model of Instruction, Visible Learning, CommonLit, Imagine Math, Word Study, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) development and instructional planning through the use of the Connected Action Roadmap (CAR).

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)

Since March 2021, the Collingswood Board of Education has had a standing agenda item and formal update on school reopening for the public meeting with opportunities for public comment. In addition, the district has hosted several committees made up of stakeholders that include: parents, local business owners, medical professionals, borough officials, and school district employees to vet the CDC guidelines (current at the time) and how best to implement them in our buildings.

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 district has continued to engage its school community on the topic of reopening. This has been accomplished through the administration of family surveys, the inclusion of parents on planning teams, the communication of information through multiple platforms, and the solicitation of feedback from parents during in-person focus groups at each school. Attention has been given to ensure that information is readily available and accessible to parents written in a language that is easy to understand. The district is also ensuring that staff are available to communicate with families whose first language is not English. Assistive technology and translation services are available through the use of the district website and most web browsers.