



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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Edgewater School District

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

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 01/06/2022

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:

Dependent upon the NJDOE mandates for mask wearing all staff and student will:

- Face masks will be provided to staff and students as needed.
- All staff members will be required to wear face masks in accordance with the NJDOE mandate.
- Students will wear a face mask in accordance with the NJDOE mandate.
- Accommodation for students who are unable to wear a face-covering will be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with district procedures, applicable laws, and regulations.
- If a visitor refuses to wear a face mask for non-medical reasons, the visitor's entry to the school/district facility may be denied.
- Face mask signage and verbal cues will be utilized.

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

Additional staff will be posted to ensure proper distancing during the full-day schedule.

Dependent on mandates from the NJDOE on social distancing the following protocols set forth:

- Schools will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable.

- If a school in the district is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be implemented.
- All instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities will comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.
- Signage throughout the district will be utilized to foster social distancing.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Handwashing

- CDC signage on proper handwashing techniques to be posted in bathrooms.
- No-touch faucets will be installed in bathrooms to reduce contamination on high-touch surfaces.
- Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) will be located: in hallways; at the entrances and exits of buildings; near lunchrooms; and near bathrooms.

Respiratory Etiquette

- Teachers will be provided with desk shields if requested.
- Individual student desk shields will be provided if necessary as a modification.
- Students will be reminded of respiratory etiquette.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Enhanced school cleanliness protocols and procedures for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects has been in effect. The district's custodial staff have received direction to increase the following:

- All desktops, light switches, door handles, restroom fixtures, computer keyboards, and lockers are to be disinfected daily. Most of the above-mentioned areas are being disinfected multiple times each day.
- Signage has been placed in all restrooms explaining the proper procedure for proper washing of hands. Additional hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed. The district has a sufficient supply of disinfectant products in our buildings, and additional orders have been placed.
- Water fountains are only used when filling bottles.
- All classrooms, offices, and common touch points such as desks, chairs, door handles, push plates, handrails, light switches, keyboards, telephones, etc. will be disinfected.
- Bathrooms will be sanitized intermittently and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the end of the school day each afternoon.
- The school district is equipped with EPA-certified disinfectant cleaners and staff will be trained on how to use them safely and appropriately.
- The school district has backpack sprayers that will be used to disinfect classrooms, bathrooms, and other spaces at the end of the school day as an added precaution after manual cleaning is completed.
- The school district will follow standard operating procedures and replace air filtration filter replacements for all HVAC and AC units district-wide.

- The school district will make all efforts to maximize the fresh air circulation through the HVAC and AC systems district-wide.
- Windows in all classrooms will be open as much as possible and as the weather permits.

Ventilation

- All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical. Filter(s) will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Air filtration systems can be utilized in the classrooms upon teacher request thanks to a donation by Ford Motor Companies.

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

- An isolation room has been established in both school buildings for use if needed.
- All applicable federal and state requirements regarding the privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA) will be adhered to.
- If the NJDOE mandates contract tracing the following protocols will be followed:
 - The district will follow the recommendations of the local health department.
 - The Superintendent, in consultation with the Health Department, will notify the district community of confirmed cases, when applicable.
 - The school nurse in each building will be the contact for students, their families, and staff when reporting COVID-19 cases. School nurses will then report COVID-19 cases to the building principal and share the completed COVID-19 close contact spreadsheet. The building principal will report to the Superintendent, who will follow state reporting procedures.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Screening Procedures for Students and Staff will be based on requirements for the NJDOH and the NJDOE, possibilities are:

- The school district may continue to screen staff and students for COVID symptoms and temperature checks.
- Depending on mandates visitors will also be screened.

Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff

- The district will encourage parents to keep their children home when they are sick.
- Suspected COVID cases will be determined by state criteria.
- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated. Students should remain in isolation with supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.
- State Isolation and Quarantine guidelines will be followed.

- If the school district becomes aware that a COVID-19 positive individual has spent time in a district facility during the contagious period, the district will follow the Contact Tracing procedures.

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

Staff and community have received information regarding vaccinations, locations, and times for both children and adults. Additionally, staff members have been asked if the school can help them and get them on a vaccination list. We worked collaboratively with the Bergen County Department of Education, local districts, and hospitals to assist students, staff, and the community to receive vaccinations.

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

The Child Study Team (CST) reviewed each Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure that students' specific Goals and Objectives could continue to, and eventually show attainment of mastery, across our fully virtual, hybrid, and in-person models. Our special education families were contacted, and virtual meetings were scheduled to help create holistic plans that would benefit students and address their individual needs during this time. As a team, IEPs were amended to reflect some needed changes that would ensure the validity of each student's IEP. All necessary IEP documentation (evaluations, annual reviews, consents, etc.) was delivered electronically through our IEP platform and was followed up by a hard copy sent via the mail. This ensured that all state and federal guidelines, as well as timelines, were adhered to throughout this process.

Our 2021-2022 Reopening Plan will provide unique considerations that will ensure the continuity of learning, as well as the health and safety of students and staff within the least restrictive learning environment. As a district, we will continue to deliver meaningful professional development in regards to utilizing the accessibility features and accommodation tools made available through our technology-based platforms. Case managers, nurses, and administrators alike will continue to communicate regularly with the families of students who may be medically fragile to determine if accommodations and/or modifications are needed and if additional precautions need to be put in place to ensure student safety. Additionally, the CST will continue to review student progress, through data analysis, to ensure, that if an individual student's critical skills have indeed regressed during virtual instruction, compensatory services are provided to address regression

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)

- We will continue to utilize our multi-tiered system of support for academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

- We will utilize formative assessments and use the data to address student's individual learning gaps and needs.
- We will provide extended learning opportunities that are tiered to meet the needs of our student population. This will include after-school programs for Tier 2 students, 1:1 tutoring for Tier 3 students, and district-wide learning opportunities for Tier 1.
- We will have on staff one Remedial Math Teacher and two Reading Specialists to provide tiered interventions.
- We will implement a district-wide program course focused on social and emotional learning in the classroom and launch morning meetings/advisory meetings to support student needs.
- We will provide free lunch and breakfast to eligible students.

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)

The public had the opportunity to fill out a survey regarding the needs for a safe return to school. A draft of the plan was sent out to the community and an opportunity for feedback will be supplied. Input from the public will be taken into consideration by the board of education and district administration and, if warranted, changes will be made in the draft plan.

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 sent out a survey to get community feedback on the Safe Reopening of School and also posted the draft Reopening Plan to allow for suggestions and comments. The Edgewater Schools Safe Reopening Plan will be shared via weekly update.

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

Professional Development will be provided so that staff is comfortable teaching in a variety of formats that could be required during the school year. Our technical staff will be available daily to help them navigate through any problems that should arise.