



## 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: Absecon Public School District

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/15/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/23/2021

### 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

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.
- All adults will wear facial coverings at all times, unless medically contraindicated or when consuming food/beverage.
- The school district will provide facial coverings for staff or they may choose to wear their own.
- Students are required to wear masks at all times, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided, as applicable, for:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Serious underlying medical conditions
- Medically fragile students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Students who require accommodations under a plan in accordance with the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan)

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

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.
- Capacity will remain within the guidance outlined by the NJDOE and NJ State regulations.
- Students are placed in assigned seating areas physically distanced to the greatest extent possible.
- All desks will be facing the same direction to the greatest extent possible
- Desks at the elementary level will be outfitted with individual clear barriers to the greatest extent possible
- Desk barriers will be utilized for individual students assessment, related services, and direct student contact that occurs within the recommended 3-6 foot perimeter.
- PPE will be worn when students circulate through the classroom via designated pathways.

**C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.
- The district provided health protocol training to all staff members with regard to implementation of handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Hand sanitizing stations are provided at each entrance and classroom door

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

##### **- [Maintenance and Custodial Procedure Manual](#)**

##### Increased Cleaning and Disinfection

- The custodial staff will clean objects/surfaces frequently touched on a daily basis (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- Cleaning and disinfection is included in policy 3510.
- The custodial staff will use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Staff will follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (i.e. concentration, application method, contact time, etc.).
- [A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 will be used as a reference when cleaning.](#)
- In addition to normal nightly cleaning, all areas will be fogged with an electrostatic sprayer.
- Air scrubbing filtration devices will be utilized within the nursing offices and isolation space. Daily cleaning checklists will be used for all areas of the building.
- Filters will be changed twice as often as recommended by the manufacturer, every 3 months.

##### High Touch Areas

- Water fountains will be closed. Students will be instructed to bring their own water bottles or will be provided with single use disposable cups.
- All high touch points will be disinfected prior to the start of the day, and once again mid day to the maximum extent possible.
- Buildings and Grounds staff will provide teachers and staff with EPA-registered disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down regularly at their discretion, in addition to scheduled cleaning times identified within our District Cleaning Guidance.

##### Bathrooms

- Bathrooms will be monitored by district staff
- Number of students in bathrooms at the same time will be reduced, not to exceed the number of stalls in one area.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned daily, and between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency and District Cleaning Guidance.
- Bathrooms will be equipped with paper towels.

Policy: [3510 Operations and Maintenance of Plant](#)

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

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.

Response to Symptomatic Individuals:

Staff members are to report to their immediate supervisor and school nurse when symptomatic. Students who arrive at school with an elevated temperature or exhibiting designated symptoms of illness will be removed from the entryway. A staff member on duty will notify the school nurse, who will then accompany the student to a designated Isolation Room, that will be. After an assessment, the nurse may contact the parent/guardian to retrieve the student and take them home. A student may not return to school unless they present as symptom free for 24 hours, or have a physician's note.

Confirmed Cases:

NJ law requires the investigation of all reportable communicable diseases including COVID19. With every positive COVID19 case, initial contact with the individual is done as soon as possible by the Local Health Department where the case-patient resides. During the course of this interview, attempts are made to collect information about the case-patient's course of illness and exposures, which would generally include where the case-patient may have been exposed and where they potentially exposed other individuals. Following NJ Dept of Health guidelines, information obtained here will subsequently dictate our next course of action including contact tracing, additional education, and notification of appropriate individuals or entities. Due to HIPAA confidentiality laws, the Division of Public Health is not permitted to reveal the person's identity however the administration most likely will be contacted in order to provide information regarding any close contacts. The District will provide case numbers related to positive cases within each school to the County Department of Education in accordance with their outlined procedures on a daily basis as needed.

**Contact Tracing**

Upon notification that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the Atlantic County 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.

- The school district will assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual/student/staff member and/or their contacts.
- The school district will ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them. District staff will participate in the [COVID-19 Contact Tracing: A Course from Johns Hopkins](#) and turn-key relative information to necessary staff.
- The district will adhere to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA).
- A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee to assist the Health Department for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.
- The school district will develop a system to allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure which could assist school districts to provide prompt notification.
- Health departments are responsible for conducting COVID-19 case investigations and contact tracing and have legal mandates to investigate cases of communicable disease and a duty to notify contacts of exposure. The district will continue to work with the health departments whenever necessary.

Policy:

[5141.2 Illness](#)

[5141.3 Health Examinations and Immunizations](#)

[1250 Visitors](#)

#### **F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.

- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.
- Health screenings will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- The screening protocol will take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students and employees.
- Temperature checks will occur in all schools and district facilities at designated areas as needed.
- Students, staff, and permitted visitors must enter through designated entrances.
- Designated staff will monitor student, staff, and permitted visitor entry into schools and buildings. Staff will be trained in the temperature scanning device.
- If a permitted visitor's temperature is elevated, he/she will be denied access to the building.

#### Staff

All staff will be provided with the [COVID-19 Screening Form](#) to be completed each day prior to their arrival to work. Temperature scans will be taken at each designated entrance upon staff arrival. Any staff member with an elevated temperature, or exhibiting designated symptoms of illness will be excluded from entering the building.

#### Students

All families will be provided with a [COVID-19 Screening Form](#) to be reviewed each day prior to a student's arrival to school. Temperature scans will be taken at each designated entrance upon arrival. Any student with an elevated temperature, or exhibiting designated symptoms of illness will be excluded from entering the building.

#### Visitors

Visitors are encouraged to communicate with the school via remote means (phone/email) or through our intercom system located at the main entrance of each school. Entrance into any school building will be limited to extenuating circumstances. All visitors will complete the [COVID-19 Screening Form](#), participate in a temperature scan, and must wear a mask upon entry into a building. Access to areas within the building will be limited to the immediate needs of their visit. No visitor will be allowed entry into the building without a facial covering.

Policy:

[5141.2 Illness](#)

[5141.3 Health Examinations and Immunizations](#)

[1250 Visitors](#)

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

- The district provides information to all staff, as it becomes available through the CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE, as it relates to vaccination guidance, eligible individuals for vaccination, and possible vaccination locations.

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

- The district will follow CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs.
- The district will establish and maintain communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
- The district will provide ongoing public notice to the school community regarding operations, facilities, procedures, and health protocols.
- Reasonable accommodations will be implemented to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided with access to education and resources in accordance with specialized plans or physician's orders.

## **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 district's provision of Board approved curriculum within each content area and course will continue without interruption as outlined within each school's instructional schedule. Supplemental support for students in need of academic remediation will be made available within and outside of the typical school day. Social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs will be promoted internally through professional development and support within the special services department; in addition to local mental health agencies and therapists seeing students within the building. The provision of



meals will continue through delivery service for those individuals without access to the school building and meal distribution. Student health services will continue to be overseen by the school nurse in coordination with the district physician.

### **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 district solicited public comment during the Board of Education meetings on 9/28/21, 10/26/21, 11/30/21, and 12/21/21 where elements of the Safe Reopening Plan were reviewed in detail. Public comments and questions were heard and discussed as it relates to implementation of the plan.

Adjustments to the plan were made and will continue to be taken into consideration through the plans implementation, as needed, based upon public comment. Future public comment sessions may take place at monthly Board of Education meetings, at each 60-day plan revision, or 6 month review period as outlined by regulations.

**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 utilized the template offered through the NJDOE as a means of organizing the content into an understandable and uniform format. The language within the plan was reviewed for its practicality internally and through the public comment session organized and held by the district. An alternative format to the plan can be provided at individual request. Additionally, capabilities of translation and ADA accommodations are offered within the district website for personal use as needed.