



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: Wallington

Date 06/14/2021:

Date Revised:

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: All students and staff members are currently required to wear face coverings at all times while on campus or in a school building. When possible students and staff are scheduled for mask breaks where they can remove their mask for a period of time in a place that is safe. Accommodations for students who are unable to wear face masks are handled according to the individual need and in compliance with NJ DOH recommendations. For visitors, face coverings are required. Entry to campus can be prohibited if visitors are not in compliance with face covering rules. For anyone who does not have appropriate face coverings, the district will provide a daily use mask. Information regarding the use of face coverings can also be found in the District Reopening Plan, at www.wboe.org.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) Our Schools shall allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. In instances where social distancing is not possible, additional modifications will be considered, including: physical barriers between desks, facing all desks in one direction, requiring students to sit only on one side of a table, and requiring additional PPE for students. Each building in the district has provided signage as reminders for physical distancing. Where practical, one way routes in hallways can be utilized to decrease students in halls. In the elementary schools, students can remain in classroom cohorts while teachers move to the classroom which further decreases the mixing of students in hallways. Multiple lunch periods are in place to reduce the total number of students who are eating lunch at one time, and outdoor spaces are utilized where possible to encourage eating outdoors. Aides were assigned additional worktimes to accommodate smaller lunch periods.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette Nurses review hand washing procedures with students as needed. Handwashing and hand sanitizing breaks are incorporated in the school day: upon entry, before and after activities, before and after lavatory, before and after meals, or when reentering the building. Sanitation equipment is located throughout the building in the form of portable sanitizing stations, pump hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes for desktops, and soap and water in lavatories and in some classrooms. Sharing of objects and materials shall be minimized or eliminated when possible. Paper hall passes will be utilized for students who need to leave the room. Disinfectant sprays/wipes will be provided to staff for intermittent cleaning of shared objects when necessary. Facemasks, as noted in section A, are required at all times on campus or in the buildings.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: HVAC systems will be inspected for proper function yearly. Fresh air will be provided for all systems. In areas where mechanical circulation of air is not provided, HEPA purifiers will be provided. Air filters for ventilation units shall be changed regularly and will have a MERV rating of 8. A log of filter changes and inspections of HVAC systems will be kept on file. Ventilation systems are outfitted with needlepoint ionization systems in each unit and also on the roof top units where practical. In areas or buildings where there is no mechanical ventilation, portable HEPA rated air purifiers are utilized. The district maintains cleaning supplies, including hand sanitizers, gloves, and face coverings and disinfectant. Custodial staffs clean and disinfect during the school day and after school hours. Common touch areas are cleaned at regular intervals or as needed. Appropriate disinfecting materials are provided for each classroom so that desks can be sanitized after eating.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: When a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID 19, or is showing symptoms compatible with COVID 19, they shall be immediately isolated. Student or staff member will quarantine according to the NJDOH guidelines. Any areas will be closed for a minimum of 24 hours. Contact tracing will begin and the local health department will work with the nurse to determine close contacts. The school nurse will have access to student schedules and teacher schedules to determine who may have had contact on a given day. Contacts are made to those who have had close contact to offer next steps. Nurses and building administrators will receive professional development on contact tracing in schools. The school district will advise information on the importance of contact tracing to all personnel, as well as their potential role in assisting with contact tracing when that information becomes available from the NJDOH. All FERPA requirements to privacy and sharing of student records must be adhered to at all times when consideration is made for the school's role in contact tracing.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: As included in the Road Back Plan, screening procedures include the following: Families may be required to fill out pre-screening forms prior to a student's entry to school. Staff members will visually check students for symptoms upon arrival to a school facility, including performing temperature checks. Temperature checks may be universal, random, or as necessitated due to students or staff members showing signs and symptoms compatible with COVID 19. All exams or screenings shall be performed safely and with the interests of student and staff privacy in mind. School administration have encouraged parents to keep their child home when they are sick. Sections of the plan that address diagnostic and screening testing are A.1.d. (1) and A.1.e. Appendices of the Fall 2020 Plan that address this topic are appendices D and E.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: The majority of staff members have been fully vaccinated. The district has coordinated with the BCASA as well as the NJ Department of Health to make available vaccines on a lottery basis for staff who are eligible and who wish to have the vaccine. The district will continue to utilize these lotteries whenever possible. When last posted in April of 2021, there were no more staff members wishing to be vaccinated. As the NJDOH and County Office of Education release more opportunities for vaccinations, the district distributes the information to all staff members through the district email system. School nurses have information available for parents of students who are eligible to receive vaccinations, and record these medical records in the student files.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies: In all cases, the district has provided reasonable accommodations for individuals who have disabilities or who are at higher risk of infection or serious illness. This includes students who are considered medically fragile, those with IEPs for medical issues, 504 students, or students with specific disabilities or illnesses that would require thoughtful accommodations. For screening and follow up on students, Nurses take into consideration any of the aforementioned disabilities or specific illnesses and make accommodations accordingly. Sections of the plan that address appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies are sections A.1.a.(1)(e), A.1.b.(2)(a), A.1.c.(1) & (2), A.1.e.(1)(d), A.1.e.(5), A.1.e.(6)(d), A.2 and B.1.d. Appendices of the Fall 2020 Plan that addresses this topic are appendices A, B, C, E, K, and L.

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 has performed an extensive needs assessment in order to apply for funding under the CRRSA-ESSER II grant, and this funding will allow the district to continue to provide all services outlined in the Road Back Plan to open schools. Digital Divide funding was utilized to provide adequate technology for virtual learning to all families in the district, as well as hotspots for internet service. Through the CRRSA-ESSER II funding, the district will provide enhanced mental health services, professional development for staff, academic and enrichment instruction for students, RTI/Multi-Tiered System of Supports for struggling students, and STEM enrichment activities for all students. The district has also increased staffing in the areas of Reading and Occupational Therapies in order to remediate the impact of isolation our students have experienced. A behaviorist will be on staff during the school year to assist in finding solutions to issues that may have been exacerbated. SEL training for professional staff to enhance and promote SEL in our classrooms. Funding will be used to supply the schools with necessary supplies and services throughout the year.

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)** Each school in the district has stand-alone pandemic response teams comprised of: Parents, Students, Teachers, Association Membership, Administrators, and Health Professionals. These teams were convened the week of May 31, 2021, and the Safe Return to Schools Plan was reviewed in each meeting. Members were asked to submit any questions, comments, or needs for clarification to be included in the plan by a date prior to June 14, 2021. In addition, public comment was sought at the regularly scheduled Board of Education Meeting on June 14th, 2021 and a hearing was held on that date prior to the vote on the approval of the plan. Comments from the public hearing have been included in the plan. The public hearing was advertised publicly both in the newspaper and on the district website.

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 followed the recommended format from the New Jersey Department of Education in presenting this Safe Reopening to Schools Plan. The plan is written in English as that is the primary language spoken by our students and their families. However, the district has two demographic sub-groups with a significant percentage of non-english speakers - the predominant language spoken in these homes is either Polish or Spanish. The district will make available translators in both Polish and Spanish at all three school locations upon request of any individual. In addition, the district will provide an alternatively accessible format of this plan for any individual with a disability who should request it. Any individual who requires ADA or translation services should contact: Barbara Sondej - Director of Curriculum - at sondej@wboe.org, or (973)777-0808 ext 109.