



## 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.

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

---

**LEA Name:** Edison Township Board of Education (ETBOE)

**Date (mm/dd/yyyy):** 06/11/2021

**Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):** 06/21/2021

### 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 ETBOE acknowledges the recommendations from the CDC and the NJ Department of Health. Current practice is defined in District Policy 1648 which include:

- A. School staff, students, and visitors are required to wear face coverings while on school property unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age. This policy is updated as the CDC recommends new measures for maintaining safety through the wearing of masks.
- B. Exceptions to the Requirement for Face Coverings
  - (1) The individual is in extreme heat outdoors.
  - (2) A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering.
  - (3) During the period a student is eating or drinking.
  - (4) Face coverings may be removed during gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart.

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

Each building displays distance markings with the use of signs, tape and/or paint. While in school, staff, students, and visitors are socially distanced according to CDC guidelines maximized to the greatest extent possible with desks facing the same direction. When riding the school bus, one (1) student to a two-seater and two (2) students to a three-seater where possible. Family members are encouraged to sit together when possible. Additional guidelines are listed in the Restart and Recovery Plan available at <https://www.edison.k12.nj.us/administration/superintendent/welcome-back-2020-2021>.

## **C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

Before starting the 2021-2022 school year, staff will have an updated professional development on handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Start of the year procedures with students will include best practices for hand washing and respiratory etiquette. Hand sanitizing dispensers are installed at all entrances, exits, and easy-to-access common areas at each facility. Custodial staff schedules include checking and restocking the hand sanitizer dispensers and bathroom soap dispensers. All teachers have bottle hand sanitizer with available refills. Staff and students are encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue when available when not wearing a mask and washing or sanitizing hands.

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

A facility cleaning practice has been established in District Policy 1648. A procedure manual was developed and is incorporated in Appendix G of District Policy 1648 to establish cleaning and disinfecting schedules for schools and school equipment, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used. These practices include:

- A. Best practices for cleaning and disinfecting district-owned school buses and other transportation vehicles.
- B. Adhering to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise.
- C. A procedure and checklist for cleaning classrooms, labs, bathrooms, and touch points.
- D. A procedure for building disinfection if a case of COVID is identified.
- E. Maintaining proper ventilation and circulation of air.

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

ETBOE employs the protocols in District Policy 1648 and Appendix F of the policy guide for a COVID-19 positive employee or student which include:

- A. Upon notification that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will call the school district to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus.
- B. Upon notification that a student or a staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will work in conjunction with the school nurses and trained contact tracers to determine the close contacts of the individual.
- C. District officials will notify local health officials, as well as staff and families as appropriate, of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
- D. The school district shall ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.

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

The school district shall screen students and employees upon arrival at a school or work location for COVID-19 symptoms and a history of exposure.

- A. School staff visually check students and employees for symptoms upon arrival (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms.
- B. Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- C. The screening protocol will take into account students and employees with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students and employees.
- D. Students and employees with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- E. If the school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a school district facility tests positive for COVID-19, district officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.

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

The ETBOE coordinated with Hackensack Meridian Health/JFK Community Hospital to offer all employees an opportunity to be COVID-19 vaccinated. Currently, the district is sharing ongoing opportunities with the local health agencies for additional vaccines for staff, students, and families.

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

The ETBOE recognizes special populations will require unique considerations to ensure the continuity of learning as well as the health and safety of students and staff within a least restrictive environment. The school district shall provide educators with professional development to best utilize the

accessibility features and accommodation tools made available through technology-based platforms in accordance with District Policy 1648. Students shall continue to receive individualized support that meet the requirements of the IEP and 504 plans.

## **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 Edison Township Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service will be centered on returning students and staff to a full-time, full capacity, pre-COVID-19 educational experience with health and safety precautions, increased learning opportunities and social-emotional support. A continuous review of our needs assessment will monitor progress in identifying challenges, root causes, and tailored objectives, measures and targets with strategies to improve those areas. If COVID-19 related issues arise requiring quarantining, all students will continue to have access to live streaming, synchronous learning with access to the academic, social, emotional, and food related supports. In addition, students with disabilities will continue to have access to their specialized instruction, related services, and modifications/accommodations as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## **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)**

In developing the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, Edison Township Public Schools sought public and stakeholder feedback by sharing the draft plan in a survey shared with school staff, students and families. Results from the survey were reviewed and taken into account for the final draft of the safe return 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 plan is available in multiple languages linked below – English, Spanish, Hindi, Telugu. The plan may be orally translated for parents using the Talking Points platform for two-way multilingual communication. Individuals interested in accessing a different language must contact their child’s school directly for further information. Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability may be provided with the plan in an alternative format by contacting the Department of Special Services at 732-452-4977.

**Translations:**

Hindi (coming soon)

[Spanish](#)

Telegu (coming soon)