



## 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 factsheet](#).

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 and update every 6 months**. 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: Deal Borough

Date (06/06/2021):

Date Revised (11/14/2023) BOE Approved 11/20/2023

### 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

- Staff members and students will be required as mandated by EO 251 to wear face coverings whenever inside of the building and in proximity, within 3ft., to colleagues or students unless it is detrimental to their health as verified by a doctor's note and medical diagnosis.
- Face shields were provided to all teachers to utilize for instruction, if unvaccinated, when it is necessary that their mouths be visible to the students. Face coverings with clear mouth coverings will be available to staff members for use when needed.
- Students will be provided instruction on proper personal hygiene practices that will help prevent/reduce the transmission of viruses. The school nurse will meet with each grade level throughout the school year to instruct on proper use and hygiene of masks where appropriate and reinforce through refresher visits throughout the school year.
- Face shields will be provided to all teachers to utilize for instruction when it is necessary that their mouths be visible to the students. Face coverings with clear mouth coverings will be available to staff members for use when needed.
- In accordance with CDC recommendations masks should be worn by all students and staff that are unvaccinated.
  - Confirmation of vaccination will be asked for but not required
- Students will utilize face coverings while indoors. Masks may be removed during scheduled mask breaks, recess, lunch, snacks, drinks and at the direction of an adult at appropriate times.
  - Breaks will occur outside unless inclement weather prohibits. If needed students will enter the gymnasium or cafeteria for brief face covering breaks.

- Students arriving without a face covering or who may lose their face covering throughout the day will be provided a face covering from the school if necessary.

## **B. Physical distancing**

- In-person instruction will be presented at full capacity where possible in the classrooms allowing for appropriate social distancing (3ft./Greatest extent possible) in the classroom. Face coverings will be expected in the classrooms.
- If appropriate, physical barriers may be utilized between desks if social distancing is not possible or students will be collaborating within the 3ft social distancing requirement.
- Larger areas of the building may be utilized (gym, cafeteria) when necessary to accommodate physical distancing.
- Signage and floor markings will be utilized around the building specifically in the morning gathering locations and in the hallways. Floor stickers will be used to create separation in the hallways.
- Grades K-3 will eat the first lunch shift with recess the 2nd half
- Grades 4-8 will eat the 2nd lunch shift with recess the 1st half
- K-3 teachers will walk their students to their assigned lunch location and get them seated in their assigned seats. Teachers assigned to lunch duty will supervise.
- 4-8 heading for recess will be dismissed out the front doors to avoid students entering the cafeteria. Teachers should stagger their dismissal to avoid a mass of students in the hallway and exiting the building. Students will have individual privacy shields to utilize while unmasked and eating.
- Students will remain in their assigned seats throughout the lunch period. (20-25 minutes) Garbage pails will be taken to the students.
- When finished eating, students will be asked to replace their mask onto their face.

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

- All staff members will be provided a refresher PD on the appropriate hygiene for themselves as well as how to present and implement this with students in the classroom.
- Students will be provided instruction on proper personal hygiene practices that will help prevent/reduce the transmission of viruses.
  - Proper etiquette when sneezing or coughing
- All classrooms are equipped with either sinks or hand sanitizing stations that will be utilized when entering and exiting the classrooms.
- Students will wash hands or sanitize hands prior to sitting for lunch and/or snack.
- Teachers will create routines in the classroom to allow students to wash their hands with soap and water on a regular basis and during critical periods, such as, before and after lunch and recess, after blowing their nose, or coughing or sneezing and returning from the bathroom.

- Hand sanitizer will be available at all tables in the cafeteria during lunch periods.

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

- The Deal School utilizes steam-based heat and individual window mounted air conditioning units throughout the building, with the exclusion of the gymnasium, which eliminates the use of recycled air throughout the building except for the new Science/Tech wing. This is a benefit in reducing the spread of viruses. Filters in the new wing of the building will be changed regularly according to the manufacturers recommendations.
- When appropriate and safe, teachers may open classroom windows for better airflow and ventilation.
- Fresh air dampers in each individual classroom univents will be set to maximize the fresh air flow from outside into the classrooms.
- Window fans will be utilized to create air flow exchange in the classroom as often as possible.
- Classroom doors may remain in the open position to increase airflow and to eliminate the touch point of doorknobs.
- All filters will be changed according to the manufacturer recommendations and we will utilize the MERV 13 filters to maximize filtering of allergens. This includes the gymnasium and new wing which utilizes central air conditioning units to cool that area. Gymnasium doors will remain closed.
- Increase the frequency of routine interior and exterior touch-point cleaning, including, but not limited to, cafeteria tables, door handles, panic bars, door pulls, doorknobs and counter tops.
- Increase the frequency of routine restroom cleaning of all touch points including, but not limited to, faucets, flush meters, door handles, door pulls, hand dryers and soap & sanitizer dispensers.  
Increase the frequency of extensive classroom cleaning of all touch points including, but not limited to, door handles, doorknobs, pull handles, desktops, tabletops, ledges, windowsills and chairs.
- Ensure all District buses are cleaned regularly with use of the antibacterial wipes. (This is the responsibility of the individual bus contractor)
- Exhaust fans have been purchased to create a high level of air exchange in the cafeteria.
- Older students will eat outside whenever weather is permissible. This will be a possibility for our younger students as well. Bringing a beach towel to sit on outside may be a good idea for these days. Some tables will be available as well.

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

All contact tracing outside of school will be done by the Monmouth County Regional Health Commission upon notification by the school. The school will provide to the MCRHC the following documents:

- Class list
  - Name
  - Address
  - Parent Contact
  - Possibly class schedules
- Staff Member Contact Information
- Copy of letter sent home to parents and staff notifying them of a positive case and requiring symptom watch/quarantine.
- The school nurse will make the appropriate notification to the NJDOH/CDS
- Contact tracing within the school building will be done by the school nurse and building administration.

**F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

- Parents will be expected to monitor student health and keep any students not feeling well home.
- Students displaying symptoms of COVID 19 may be sent to the nurse for temperature checks and may be sent home and asked to be tested for COVID 19.

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

- All staff members were given the opportunity to receive the vaccination through a relationship set up with the Visiting Nurses Association.
- Vaccination will continue to be encouraged and opportunities offered/shared with staff as they arise.
- Information regarding vaccination opportunities for students have been shared with parents as they become available.

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

- Students who are unable to wear a mask/face covering will be asked to wear a face shield where appropriate while in the building and will continue to observe a 3ft. social distancing expectation to the greatest extent possible while inside the building.
- All students will report to their designated areas upon arrival in the building until it is time to report to class.
- Students will be provided instruction on proper personal hygiene practices that will help prevent/reduce the transmission of viruses.

## 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)

### Provide Conditions of Learning That Will Foster Social and Emotional Well Being of Students, Families, and Educators:

- The Deal School will be extending our RTI program to lengthen the school day by an hour to address those students who are our more struggling learners and have experienced learning loss due to the pandemic. This program will focus mainly on reading and writing skills and mathematics.
- The guidance department will have extended hours for the 21-22 school to further facilitate our social emotional learning program. This will include a 1 time per week SEL course with the guidance staff for all classes grades K – 8.
- A dedicated SEL classroom will be furnished to create a conducive environment for this class.
- The current SEL program will be extended to create school community and a positive climate across grade levels with multi-grade level Morning Meetings as well as school wide morning meetings.
- We will explore evening activities that will engage families into the SEL program through community building activities and events.
- They will also attend and turnkey training for our staff members. There will be a focus on mindfulness for our staff members and a new staff room will be created to help provide a safe space for teachers to decompress outside of the classroom.
- We will continue to utilize our Mindfulness consultant as needed to provide PD opportunities for the staff

### Improve Equitable Access to Grade Level Content and High Quality Resources for Each Student:

- The Deal School will be extending our RTI program to lengthen the school day by an hour to address those students who are our more struggling learners and have experienced learning loss due to the pandemic. This program will focus mainly on reading and writing skills and mathematics.
- All students will have the opportunity to participate in class offerings for their grade level including enrichment courses in the related arts if feasible to provide these courses.
- Benchmark assessment data along with the Start Strong data will allow us to further assess potential learning gaps driving our instruction in the classroom and structuring intervention groups for tier 2 and 3 interventions.

- The new Learning Commons will allow all teachers access to a learning space that lends itself to project based learning and collaboration allowing them to more easily provide PBL activities to increase student social learning engagement.

**Prioritize Content and Learning Focus on the Depth, Rather Than the Pace of Instruction:**

- All curricula are updated to the current NJSLA standards and those mandated to be by 9/22 are currently being reviewed and revised for approval by the BOE.
- Grade level teams will participate in weekly PLC meetings to discuss student learning and progress as well as develop SMART goals to further their knowledge and implementation of relevant topics/pedagogies.
- Teachers will be provided out of district PD opportunities as they arise.
- Teachers will resume our building initiative of integrating the arts to provide students with authentic integrated learning experiences.
- Resources found in the new Tech/Science wing will open up learning opportunities in the STEAM field to students providing them with authentic real world learning experiences.
- We will continue our relationship with Drop the Beat Farms in further developing our gardening and sustainability programs that allow students engaging learning experiences.

**Implement a K-12 Accelerated Learning Cycle:**

- Teachers will use multiple assessments in the classroom to personalize student learning and to develop and assess individual student learning goals as students progress in their learning.
- LinkIt benchmarks will be utilized to assess student baselines as we start the school year. This data will be utilized to assess prior knowledge and deficiencies in an effort to personalize student learning in the classroom. Students who may have mastered standards will be enriched through depth of learning when addressing individual student learning standards.
- Teachers will utilize PLC time and staff meetings to collaborate and discuss effective formative practices and assessment data that will drive small group instruction.
- The RTI and Title 1 programs will extend beyond the school day for those who need targeted instruction and are receiving tier 2 and 3 interventions.

**Attendance and Student Engagement:**

- Teachers received training on appropriate trauma informed practices necessary to address the social and emotional needs of individual students in the midst of our current situation.

- Student attendance will be monitored for excessive absences as remote learning is not an option for the 21-22 school year. Students are expected to attend school regularly and any students who are showing patterns of truancy will be addressed following the Deal School policies for attendance and truancy.
- Students who have shown patterns of absenteeism or relied heavily on the remote learning throughout the 20-21 school year will be monitored and appropriate interventions will be implemented on a case by case basis. We will follow the Deal School attendance policy and utilize our guidance staff to provide any interventions or accommodations necessary for these students.
- With the extension of the guidance department, counselors will be available to students and families to address any concerns or emotional/psychological issues with students returning to school in a full-time capacity. Resources through the state of NJ (Perform Care) will be available for out of school counseling if the need arises.
- The district has adopted the Responsive Classroom model and will focus on logical consequences when dealing with behavioral concerns or truancy keeping in mind the social and emotional well-being of students.

#### **SchoolClimate:**

- A school climate survey will be distributed and analyzed as we start the 21-22 school year. This data will be used to steer the needs of the social and emotional learning in the building.
- The implementation of Morning Meeting/Responsive Classroom will act as the Social and Emotional Learning program at the Deal School and will reinforce a sense of community among classes establishing a positive school climate.

#### **StudentDiscipline:**

- Daily Morning Meetings along with the weekly SEL classes with grades K-8 will address and reinforce appropriate social skills and interactions reinforcing positive and acceptable behavior at the Deal School.
- Restorative Justice and logical consequences will be implemented when addressing behavioral concerns.

#### **Trauma-InformedSupports:**

- The Morning Meeting/Responsive Classroom program will be utilized to build relationships with students in an effort to foster a sense of belonging and a positive strong school community.
- The guidance department will set up small group and individual counseling sessions as needed in an effort to address student therapeutic and social needs.



### **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)**

- The plan was posted on the Deal School website and placed on the June Board of Education agenda for public comment. The plan was developed utilizing the current guidelines in place for the NJDOE and the state of New Jersey outlined in the Deal Borough Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen Schools. This plan was developed in collaboration with a number of stake holder representatives that formed our Reopening Committee.

**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 was developed utilizing the template provided to us by the NJDOE. The plan has been posted on the Deal School website and made available to parents in all languages native to families at the Deal School. These languages are English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Spanish, and Urdu.