



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: Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District

Date: 06/22/2021

Date Revised: 12/12/2023

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
 - Require schools to educate and enforce any required mask wearing
 - Guide students and staff members in situations where masks are optional
 - Ensure masks are correctly worn when required

- B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)
 - Require schools to enforce any required physical distancing
 - Guide students and staff members in situations where physical distancing is optional

- C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
 - Follow NJDOH guidance regarding handwashing and respiratory etiquette
 - Provide opportunities for handwashing or hand-sanitizing during the school day, such as before and after eating
 - Guide students in situations where handwashing is optional
 - Educate students on the importance of handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
 - Follow NJDOH guidance regarding cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities
 - Adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time).
 - Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible
- E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
 - Follow district policy and procedures regarding contact tracing and any resulting need for isolation or quarantine
 - Communicate and cooperate with the local health officials
- F. Diagnostic and screening testing
 - Provide information regarding testing and access through the school physician for families in need
- G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible
 - Follow guidance regarding vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals
- H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies
 - Follow NJDOH guidance regarding accommodations for children with disabilities
 - Educate staff members, students, and families regarding the accommodations
 - Review individual accommodations with the district physician and local health official
 - Prepare CST, case managers, nurses, and teachers related to requests specific to needs presented by students with disabilities

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. The BRRSD will ensure continuity of services to address the needs of students and staff. The students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs will be supported by creating a system that provides more universal support in these areas to all students through school-based teams as well as by providing more access to mental health professionals. For staff members, the professional development offered will continue to balance the instructional needs of educators with their own

emotional and mental health needs through strategic design and allowing professional choice when appropriate. Food service will continue to focus on providing nutritious meals that are served in a way that is in accordance with food service guidance and which makes individuals feel comfortable.

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. The BRRSD sought public comment as to the elements of this plan through a survey sent to all parents/guardians and through public comment at Board of Education Meetings. The local context allowed district educators to fully understand the needs of the community as related to the specific interventions that would most benefit the academic achievement and overall wellness of students.

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. The BRRSD ensured that the plan is comprehensible and in a format that is easy to understand for parents/guardians, staff members, and the general public. Through the use of clear and concise language, the plan was developed to emphasize the priority areas as related to health and safety needs, academic needs, and social-emotional needs connected to school performance and overall mental health. The plan is easily translated through Google and through our school district communication tools. The plan was designed to also easily be reviewed and discussed by the district translator as well as the ADA contact, as needed.