STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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.**

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that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.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.

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

LEA Name: **Springfield Township**

Date: 06/15/2021 **Date Revised: December 1, 2022**

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: Masks for all individuals will be optional inside the school and on school buses effective March 7, 2022. The district will continue to provide properly sized masks to any students, staff, or visitors upon request. For any students or staff who are returning to school following a period of quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 case, the wearing of a face mask will be encouraged but not mandatory through day 10 of the onset of symptoms.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): In accordance with recommendations from the CDC and guidance from the State of New Jersey, Springfield Elementary School will continue maintaining a social distance of three feet between individuals whenever possible. We ask that students and employees share materials and supplies as little as possible. Students will have their own sets of supplies that will be stored and labeled separately. In all grades, we ask that students not share devices, food, school supplies, or other items in an effort to reduce the spread of germs. If this is not possible, disinfecting wipes will be available in areas where shared items are likely to be found, so students can clean items between users.

The school has installed clear Plexiglas shields in areas where there is frequent face-to-face interaction (front desk, nurse's office, etc.). Upon request by a student and/or parent, Plexiglas desk shields are available for individual student desks. We strongly encourage students to bring their own water bottles to school in an effort to promote hydration, encourage sustainable practices, and limit the spread of germs; touchless water bottle filling stations are in place and accessible for all students.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should take place after going to the bathroom, before/after eating, after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended. Springfield has hand sanitizer dispensers in every classroom and at key entry/exit points on campus. Faculty and staff will encourage students to wash hands at key moments throughout the day, and disinfecting protocols will be in place for students utilizing individual classroom and hallway bathrooms.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: Springfield Elementary School will adhere to current cleaning practices and protocols and will stay informed of any new guidance from local health authorities. In addition, we have developed a schedule to maintain regular cleaning/disinfecting of high-touch surfaces throughout the day. Special attention is given to classroom surfaces, bathrooms, door handles, shared objects, and high-traffic areas. Disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer will be available for use in each classroom. Where disinfectants are used, products will be registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Our school utilizes multiple EMist EM360 electrostatic disinfectant sprayers to increase our cleaning capacity and efficiency. The EMist EM360 is a powerful, efficient and cost-effective disinfection treatment that places an electrostatic charge to liquid disinfectants as they leave the spray nozzle, which causes them to cling to virtually any surface. One gallon of solution can cover up to 54,000 high-touch point square feet of surface area per hour. We have also purchased two EPIX360 cordless handheld electrostatic disinfectant sprayers to assist during the day with high contact areas, particularly bathrooms and shared spaces such as the cafeteria. The EPIX360 lays down an even, uniform and wraparound layer of germ-killing disinfectant up to 4,000 high-touch square feet per 8 ounces of solution.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: Contact tracing occurs as required by the BCHD depending on the risk category. Our school nurse serves as the liaison between the school district and health department. Close contacts are determined by proximity, time, and PPE. Seating charts are reviewed in all areas to determine the close contacts. Isolation rooms have been established in the school and are used for presumptive positive cases.

Effective March 7, 2022 the following protocols will go into effect regarding isolation and quarantine:

- Student and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 will quarantine per the most recent CDC guidelines
- Vaccinated household contacts who show no symptoms will not be required to quarantine
- Unvaccinated household contacts will be required to quarantine for a period of five days
- Staff and students showing multiple COVID related symptoms will be required to quarantine for a period of five days (may return to school prior to day six if symptoms resolve and a negative rapid antigen or PCR test is provided)
- School-based close contacts, regardless of vaccination status, will be provided with the **option** to quarantine and receive remote/virtual instruction; this optional quarantine will run a period of five days.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

STUDENT ARRIVAL - PARENT DROP OFF

A designated drop off area has been provided for parents; at this drop off location, parents will remain in their vehicles with students exiting and entering the building. Students presenting with symptoms (runny nose, coughing, sneezing) may be referred to the Nurse for a temperature check. Students presenting with no symptoms will be directed to their homeroom teacher.

STUDENT ARRIVAL - BUS

Springfield will continue to utilize five bus routes to transport students to and from school. Students presenting with symptoms (runny nose, coughing, sneezing) may be referred to the Nurse for a temperature check. Students who present with no symptoms will enter the building via the following entry points:

- Kindergarten, Grade One, & Grade Two students will enter via the Main Entrance to the building (Door 1)
- Grade Three through Six students will enter the building via the entrance door adjacent to the School Nurse's Office (Door 15).

STUDENT DISMISSAL - PARENT PICK UP

To allow for social distancing of students picked up by parents at the conclusion of the school day, parents are required to notify the school office in advance regarding their intention to pick their child up from school (this may be done by note, by phone, or by email). A master list will be provided to all staff to ensure awareness of these arrangements. Students in grades K - 3 with last names beginning with A through J will be called to the cafeteria starting at 3:18, followed by grades 4 - 6 at 3:12. Students in grades K - 3 with last names beginning with K through Z will be called to the gymnasium starting at 3:20, followed by grades 4 - 6. Specific areas of the parking lot have been designated as parent/guardian waiting areas. Students will be released to parents in a staggered manner to provide continued social distancing and ensure the safety of everyone while navigating the student pick up and parking lot areas.

STUDENT DISMISSAL - BUS

To ensure proper social distancing in the hallways during dismissal, students taking the bus home will be dismissed from their classrooms. Faculty and staff who do not have responsibility for an afternoon homeroom will be assigned hall monitor duties to assist students with maintaining social distancing during dismissal, and members of the administrative team will be stationed outside to ensure safety as students load the busses.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: We have worked closely with faculty and staff to ensure they are aware of and have access to COVID-19 vaccination sites, and accommodations (e.g. substitute coverage where applicable or allowing staff members to leave early for a scheduled appointment) have continuously been made for staff electing to get the vaccine.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies: Students with disabilities are governed by the IEP. Accommodations are provided for students who require additional safety measures, such as the inability to wear a face covering, for example. Alternative PPE is provided for the student or an exception is made for a student, when appropriate. Staff are provided additional PPE to further support their health and safety. Executive Orders, Department of Education guidance and/or guidance from the county health department may supersede all BOE policy language and may lead to a change in our district protocols.

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.

All students are eligible to attend in person 5 days a week. Tutoring will be provided for students in need of additional support and intervention. Revisions to the instructional framework enable teachers to provide targeted and direct instruction individually and in small groups. A summer learning academy has been created for all grade levels and will continue to be offered during July 2023. An Intervention and Enrichment schedule is incorporated in K-6, and intervention will be provided to all students requiring additional remediation. A three-tiered social-emotional learning program is in place to support the mental well-being of all students.

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.

A draft of this revised plan is being provided to parents/guardians for review and comment on February 16, 2022. On February 15, 2022 an overview of the plan was provided during the Board of Education meeting. Subsequent iterations of the plan shall provide opportunities for public comment in a similar manner.

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 plan shall be posted in English and Spanish to the district website and made available for translation to any other language or braille upon request. For anyone seeking assistance with reading the plan, upon request a district employee will be made available for an in-person, phone, or Zoom meeting to provide said assistance. Hard copies of the plan shall be made available for parent/guardian without access to the internet or an electronic communication device.