



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: Pascack Valley Regional High School District

Date (09/24/21):

Date Revised (03/07/22):

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

As of March 7, 2022, the state mandate requiring in school universal masking will expire, and individual school districts and school boards will be able to make the determination as to whether universal masking is appropriate for their schools. In making this decision, the Pascack Valley Regional High School District has consulted with the LHD and school district medical personnel, as recommended. In addition to school district policies, individuals (including parents/guardians) need to make masking decisions based on their specific situation (e.g., if they or their family members are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19). Effective March 7, 2022, masking will be optional for students, staff, and visitors to the Pascack Valley Regional High School District. Any staff, student, or visitor who wishes to wear a mask for any reason in any location is welcomed and encouraged to do so. The district pledges full support for everyone to make their own choices regarding masking.² Exceptions: The District will require mask wearing in the following circumstances: ● During periods of elevated community transmission, as indicated by a region or county designation of “red” (very high) on the Covid-19 Activity Level Index (CALI). Masking will be “highly recommended” for all during periods of “orange” (high). ● During an active local outbreak as determined by the local health department(s) ● After returning for isolation or quarantine. Staff, students, or visitors who are in the school building during days 6-10 of isolation or quarantine should continue to mask. ● In the nurses’ office. All staff, students, and visitors who enter the nurses office must wear a mask while in the nurse’s office at the nurses’ discretion. Students, staff, or visitors who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms must wear a mask until they leave the premises. Learn more about the proper choice, use, and removal of masks on the CDC website. Generally, it is recommended

that masks completely cover your nose and mouth, fit snugly against the sides of your face, and don't have gaps. KN-95 or N-95 masks are recommended. Fabric masks, gaiters, and masks with vents are no longer considered to be as effective

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

The District will continue to adhere to the latest NJDOE/NJDOH guidelines (The Road Forward, June 2021). "Consider maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent practical while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students." Students will return to schools in un-cohorted formats. All instructional and non-instructional spaces will be configured to maintain physical distance to the maximum extent practicable while considering best instructional practices and the risk/benefit for the physical, mental, and social-emotional health of students and staff.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Fully functional hand sanitizer stations are located at all public entrances in each building and at regular distances in the hallways and in each classroom and office. We have prepared and will maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol): in each classroom (for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer); at entrances and exits of buildings; near lunchrooms and toilets. Hand hygiene opportunities will be provided during the school day. Students will be reminded to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds: 1. Upon arrival to school and before leaving school; 2. Before and after eating; 3. After using the bathroom; 4. After blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing; and, 5. When hands are

visibly soiled. If washing with soap and water is not possible, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer/wipes. Signs will be posted to help educate and remind people to use protective equipment when applicable, social distance and follow good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

B. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

School officials will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. The custodians will disinfect all rooms every night. Adequate ventilation shall be ensured in indoor facilities, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Filters must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer's recommendations. When weather allows, windows should be opened to the most reasonable extent possible to allow for greater air circulation when air conditioning is not in use, unless doing so poses a safety or health risk.

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

Contact Tracing Per the CDC, close contact in a classroom setting, for students, is defined as being within 3 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion. The district will utilize its discretion and the professional opinion of the district health care team to make the determination of the need for contact tracing and resulting quarantine in conjunction with current official guidance and local community spread. Working in partnership with parents, it is essential for parents to communicate with the school nurse if your child has been identified as a close contact outside of school. PVRHSD school nurses are trained contact tracers, and they work closely with the Health Department, and the School Physician, and the School Nurses to perform contact tracing responsibilities where appropriate. This may include: ● Assisting in identifying the contacts with the school and communicating this information with the Health Department and ● Notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements with the guidance of the Health Department while maintaining confidentiality. The Health Department contact tracing team may notify and interview the close contacts identified by the school and reinforce the exclusion requirements.

D. Diagnostic and screening testing

Parents will screen students daily before their children leave the house for in-person instruction. This includes temperature and symptom checking. Parents/Guardians are asked to e-sign the 2021-22 Parent Statement of Assurance of Compliance with COVID-19 Guidelines quarterly . The letter will include: signs and symptoms of COVID-19; what to do when a child is ill; medical, health department and health insurance resources; travel advisory information; reminder to update emergency contact information on Genesis; the importance of sending healthy children to school with a mask; and the necessity of picking up ill children from school promptly. The compliance agreement can be found on the Parent Portal under “Forms” and must be e-signed by September 1, 2021 for students to continue to attend in-person school or school sponsored Activities. When reporting absences to the school, parents should provide information about symptoms. School nurses will follow-up with the family when COVID-related symptoms are present. Temperature checks will not be taken as students enter school. It is paramount that if staff or students have COVID-19 symptoms or feel ill, that they stay home and obtain COVID-19 testing.

E. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

Vaccination is the leading public health health prevention strategy. The CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE encourages all individuals aged five years and older to get vaccinated. According to the CDC, vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, can reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19, and are effective against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta and Omnicron variants. While vaccinations are not mandatory, they are an effective means to help prevent outbreaks within the school community. Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccination or consult your healthcare provider. Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 253 requires vaccinations of all district employees and contractors. The Executive Order does provide a weekly testing component for those individuals who cannot or prefer not to get vaccinated. Effective October, 2021, all district employees who have chosen not to be vaccinated are tested weekly. For children 5 through 17 years of age, a primary series consists of 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. For persons 18 and older, a primary series consists of: • A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or • A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine) The CDC recommends that people remain up to date with their vaccines, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised and booster doses at regular time points. For the purpose of this document, “up to date” with vaccination means being fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 AND having received all recommended additional doses, including booster doses when eligible. “Fully vaccinated” means being at least two weeks past completion of a primary vaccination series. If schools are unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals should be considered not up to date.

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

The PVRHSD will follow health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-12 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and the Health Departments and our school physician. PVRHSD will collaborate with the Health Department, School Physician, and our District Mental Health Professionals to determine local guidelines while considering the risks of the physical/mental health needs of the students and staff. As per the Road Forward, we anticipate potential updates to the guidance as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) became available. All IEPs will be adhered to.

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)

Full-Day Full-Time Instruction The state of NJ and the NJ Department of Education has mandated that every NJ Public school district will reopen schools to in-person instruction for all students for the 2021-22 school year, returning to pre-Covid normal school days that will include lunch and that will address the needs of all students. Goals - Provide a reopening plan and strategy to address students' developmental and learning needs while preserving the safety of all students and staff and adhering to behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19; and, -

Plans are guided by the provision of the New Jersey Department of Education as well as recommendation from the NJ Department of Health and are informed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention guidance. Therefore, all PVRHSD schools will be open for full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. The PVRHSD will follow health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-12 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and the Health Departments and our school physician. PVRHSD will collaborate with the Health Department, School Physician, and our District Mental Health Professionals to determine local guidelines while considering the risks of the physical/mental health needs of the students and staff. As per the Road Forward, we anticipate potential updates to the guidance as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) became available. At this time:

- We are planning for full-day, five-day a week in-person instruction, with normal pre-Covid school hours;
- All students will be back for full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year;
- Parents will not be able to opt children out of in-person instruction as allowed for the 2020-2021 school year;
- Per Governor Murphy's mandate, effective March 7, 2022 the wearing of masks by students, staff, and visitors will be optional.
- Schools will reopen for students on September 1, 2021

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)

Feedback was sought from the District's Restart Committee, consisting of parents, students, teachers, association members, health care professionals, administrators, and Board of Education members at various points over the past year. Further, there was the opportunity for public comment during several Board of Education meetings where this plan was proposed and revised.

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 posted on our website. Translations to a variety of languages are provided as needed as well as alternative formats for ADA compliance.