



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: ELK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date 06/24/2021:

Date Revised N/A:

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

- Students and staff will return to school in September 2021 under a mask optional standard. Any student who wishes to wear a mask but does not have one available, will be given one by the district.
- Signs are posted throughout the buildings on the proper way to wear a mask.
- Each morning in teachers will demonstrate the proper way to wear a mask.
- A change in guidelines from the state could alter this plan

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

- All students will return to school in September without the use of cohorts or pods.
- Teachers will be instructed to arrange their classrooms to the best of their ability with distance between students
- A significant rise in COVID cases could change this as well as appropriate guidance from the Governor or NJDOE.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- All rooms in the buildings are equipped with hand sanitizing stations and sanitizing wipes
- Reminders to wash hands will be placed throughout the building, especially during cold and flu season

- Education on good hygiene practices will be sent in an electronic format to all families before the opening of school. Topics may include handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when ill, etc.
- Education will be provided each morning during homeroom about the importance of hand hygiene during the day.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- All cleaning taking place in the buildings will meet CDC guidelines and the cleaning products will be EPA approved
- The installation of ultraviolet disinfection devices installed in all ductwork is a research-based strategy for cleaner air and will be installed during the summer of 2021.
- All ventilation units will be serviced and cleaned. Filters will be replaced with the manufacturer's highest recommended MERV-rated filters.
- Outside air will be recirculated as much as possible based on the capacity of the HVAC units.
- A change in guidelines from the state could alter this plan

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

- In the event of a COVID case, contact tracing will be done by the building nurses (who have been trained in this practice) in collaboration with the Gloucester County Health Department and the NJ Department of Health
- School notification will be made by the Gloucester County Department of Health and parents
- GCHD will be responsible for outside of school contact tracing
- Teachers must utilize and adhere to strict classroom seating charts to be used for tracing purposes
- If a student or staff member is present in school when a positive case is discovered, an immediate referral to an isolation room with subsequent prompt dismissal and pick-up will be made
- Individuals should self-isolate in their household if COVID positive for a minimum of ten days. All CDC guidelines will be followed for isolation protocols.
- Students and staff who have been vaccinated will not need to quarantine upon exposure to a COVID-positive case unless the CDC guidelines on the matter change.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Parents and guardians are required to ensure that their student is feeling well before sending him/her to school. Parents will be instructed to keep their children home if they are not feeling well. Temperature checks, at home, will be strongly encouraged.

- Students who present as ill during the school day will be sent to the nurse for further follow-up and possible isolation.
- A change in guidelines from the state could alter this plan

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

- A district-wide campaign to get staff vaccinated occurred when Gloucester County opened the mega vaccination sites and prioritized educational personnel. Information was continuously shared from the County to the teachers. Many staff members took advantage of this opportunity and were scheduled through the efforts of our nurse.
- A vaccination clinic was held on school grounds for Delsea staff, students, and community members on May 24, 2021, and a follow-up clinic for the second dose will be held on June 14, 2021. Once again, many people took advantage of the opportunity.

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

- As is stated in District Policy #2460, all accommodations deemed necessary by the IEP will be adhered to fully with special attention to the need for compensatory services.

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)
- Should the District have to revert back to remote learning as was done in September 2021, we will follow the **Road Back Protocol** that was created by staff and community members and was put in place for the 2020-2021 school year. The plan is based on District Policies #1648 and 1648.02 and it contains all the required components listed above. Such a transition was extremely smooth for the Elk Township School District because of the 1:1 Chromebook program which has been in existence for eight years. All teachers have been given copious amounts of training on eLearning both through the entire summer of 2020 and throughout the 20-21 school year. The Road Back Plan can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/delsearegional.us/delseaelk/reopening-planning-process?authuser=0>

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. (1000 character limit)
- The original Road Back plan consisted of seven committees and parents were invited to be on those committees. Parents who participated were very vocal about their perspective and contributed a great deal to the final version of the plan.
 - The Safe Reopening Plan was submitted to a committee of parents and the Board of Education who reviewed the proposal and offered suggestions for change or improvement.
- 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 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 will be posted on the district website for ease of access and parents will be alerted and directed to that link. Hard copies will be available in both schools for parents who have connectivity issues.
 - For the parents of our ELL students, the plan will be translated into Spanish and shared directly with those families through the use of the school nurse who is bilingual and has served as our district interpreter in the past.