



## 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**

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**LEA Name: Pennsville School District**

**Date: 06/04/2021**

**Date Revised: 06/21/2021**

### **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

The Pennsville School District will follow NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for mask wearing in schools and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change. Once mask guidelines for the 21-22 school year are shared with school districts, they will be communicated to all parties. Appropriate signage and communications regarding appropriate mask wearing on school busses and school facilities will be shared. Vaccinated individuals will still have the option to wear a mask if the state mandate expires.

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

The Pennsville School District will follow NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for physical distancing in schools and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change. Once physical distancing mandates for the 21-22 school year are shared with school districts, they will be communicated to all parties. If still required in September, the Pennsville School district will maintain signage and verbal reminders to physically distance and will utilize cohorts/podding when possible.

Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. In situations where the district is not able to maintain physical distance recommendations, additional modifications will be considered, as per NJDOH mandates.

### C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The Pennsville School District will follow NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for handwashing and respiratory etiquette in schools and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change. The Pennsville School district will maintain verbal reminders for handwashing and respiratory etiquette, as well as signage (where appropriate and necessary).

The school district will maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol). Such stations should be:

- (a) In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- (b) At entrances and exits of buildings.
- (c) Near lunchrooms and toilets.
- (d) Children ages five and younger should be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- (e) For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations should be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

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

The Pennsville School District will follow any NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for cleaning and ventilation and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change.

All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air will have a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations with a focus on the start of the school year and check-ups throughout the year.

The following cleaning protocols will be followed:

- (a) A schedule for routine cleaning and disinfection will be kept.
- (b) Routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g. door knobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- (c) Use of all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available on the EPA's website.
- (d) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.).
- (e) Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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

The Pennsville School District will follow any NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for contact tracing, isolation and quarantine and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change.

Contact tracing will be maintained by school nurses in coordination with administrators, staff, parents and the Salem County Health Department, as appropriate. All school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee should be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing conducted by State, county, and local officials.

Process (as of 6/1/21):

School Nurses contact the Salem County Health Department for Contact Tracing

Contacts/Cohort information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department

Attendance information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department

Student, staff, team and bus cohorts will be informed and immediately placed on quarantine based on CDC and Salem County

#### F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The Pennsville School District will follow any NJDOH/NJDOE mandates for diagnostic and screening testing and adapt those protocols as mandates from state agencies change.

If still required for the 21-22 school year, daily screening procedures for students and employees will continue to be effected through a parental evaluation of student health and self-evaluation by staff members for potential COVID-19 symptoms and/or a history of exposure. These screening procedures may include the following:

- (a) Staff will visually check students for symptoms upon arrival and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms.
- (b) Health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- (c) Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
- (d) The district will take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students.
- (e) Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others.

(f) If the school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, officials will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.

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

During the week of March 8, 2021, 138 Pennsville staff members received vaccinations through a partnership with Rite Aid. Subsequent vaccination opportunities in the area were shared with staff members as they became available.

During the week of May 10th, approximately 50 current 16/17 year old students, in addition to some alumni and community members, received vaccinations at our high school through a partnership with Inspira Hospital of Mullica Hill.

Future opportunities to provide voluntary vaccinations to students and staff will be shared as they become available.

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

The Pennsville School District will follow any mandates regarding appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and adapt those protocols if mandates from state agencies change. The Pennsville School District will provide all mandated ADA accommodations, and provide educators with professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based and in-person formats. The school district will continue to ensure students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of IEP (and 504) Plans.

## **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)

The Pennsville School District will offer a summer academic program for the 21-22 school year. This program will specifically target academic gaps, instructional loss, and retention/failures from the 20-21 school year for our K-12 students. Additionally, two elementary interventionists will be hired to support academic loss and gaps for the 21-22 school year. During the 21-22 school year, extended day options will be available for struggling learners as well as after-school STEAM and project-based learning options for students. Counselors and specialists in the district will be equipped with resources for social, emotional, and mental health support for our staff and students. Staff members will be provided with professional development opportunities to support a district SEL initiative for the school year.

The Pennsville School District provided lunch and breakfast throughout the 20-21 school year on a daily basis for all students who requested it or qualified for those meals. Meals were available for pickup in addition to the delivery of meals that took place throughout the community. Meals will continue to be provided in 21-22 for all who qualify.

### **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)

Public/parental input on the NJ Road Back Plan was instrumental for the 20-21 school year with a cross section of stakeholders involved in its development. Parents were informed of evolving circumstances throughout the summer of 2020 and surveyed as to their preferences on school schedules with a majority vote determining the eventual schedule. Questions asked parents to also rate the quality and usefulness of the information being provided to them.

The ARP Safe Reopening Plan draws heavily upon that NJ Road Back Plan which was itself based on significant parental input. In addition, the sections

regarding Maintaining Health and Safety as well as Continuity of Services were shared with parents through a messaging service while also being shared with parents and the community through the school district website. Anyone with questions was provided with an email and a phone number that they could utilize to get answers or provide input on the plan.

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 was provided to parents through a district-wide messaging service, in languages appropriate to the students we serve and was shared on the district's website with accommodations that are compliant with ADA guidelines. Parents were also provided with the ability to contact us directly with any questions.