



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.** 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.

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

LEA Name: LODI

Date: 06/06/2021

Date Revised: 12/10/2021, 03/07/2022, 07/07/2022, 12/15/2022,
06/05/2023, 12/13/23 and 6/11/24

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 district maintains that wearing masks in school buildings is optional for students and staff.
- When individuals are eating in a room with other individuals, they should do so at a safe distance.
- The district will purchase disposable masks to keep on hand in the case students or staff would like to wear them.

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

- The district, to the best extent and dependent on the CALI risk level, promotes physical distancing measures to mitigate viral spread.
- Between students in classrooms:
 - In elementary schools, students should be safely distanced apart.
 - In middle schools and high schools, students should be safely distanced apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission.
 - Adults (teachers and staff), should be safely distanced apart between adults and students, at all times in the school building.
 - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band, or sports and exercise. Move these activities outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces, when possible.
 - In common areas such as school lobbies and auditoriums.
- Distancing through traffic flow
 - Schools will enforce safe and orderly transitions and movements to include stairwells, hallways, entry, and exits
 - To the extent possible, schools will designate walking lanes in the hallways and in stairwells
- Face desks in the same direction, where possible.
- Eliminate or decrease nonessential in-person interactions among teachers and staff during meetings, lunches, and other situations that could lead to adult-to-adult transmission.
- Visitors: Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible—especially with people who are not from the local geographic area (for example, not from the same community, town, city, county).
- Transportation: Create distance between children on school buses (for example, seat children one child per row, skip rows), when possible.

Open windows to improve ventilation when it does not create a safety hazard.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

- Through ongoing health education units and lessons, teach children proper handwashing and reinforce behaviors, and provide adequate supplies.
- All students and staff will wash or sanitize their hands upon entry into the school
- All students and staff will wash or sanitize their hands prior to eating snack or lunch
- Ensure that teachers and staff use proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students, teachers, and staff. If handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be used.
- Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue when not wearing a mask and immediately wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Some students with disabilities might need assistance with handwashing and respiratory etiquette behaviors.
- Adequate supplies: The district has a surplus stock of hygiene, cleaning, and sanitary supplies to ensure handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, a way to dry hands, tissues, face masks (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans. If soap and water are not readily available, schools can provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

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

- Make changes to physical spaces to maintain a healthy environment and facilities, including improving ventilation. Routinely clean high-touch surfaces (such as doorknobs and light switches).
- Ventilation: Improve ventilation to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several actions.
 - Bring in as much outdoor air as possible.
 - Ensure Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) settings are maximizing ventilation.
 - Filter and/or clean the air in the school by improving the level of filtration as much as possible. Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
 - Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Even just cracking windows open a few inches improves air circulation.
- Modified layouts: Adjust physical layouts in classrooms and other settings to maximize physical space, such as by turning desks to face in the same direction.
- Cleaning: Regularly clean high touch surfaces and objects (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.
- Communal spaces: Close communal use of shared spaces, such as cafeterias, if possible; otherwise, stagger use and clean regularly (for example, daily or as often as needed).

- Consider use of larger spaces such as cafeterias, libraries, gyms for academic instruction, to maximize physical distancing.
- Food service: Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options such as hot and cold food bars, salad or condiment bars, and drink stations.
- Water systems: Students should bring their own water bottles. Students who have forgotten or run out of water can find cups to fill at the nurse's office. The district will take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, sink faucets, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

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

- Lodi collaborates very closely with the Bergen County Department of Health Services to report positive cases within the school district. The contact tracing team (school nurses, and administrators) assist in conducting internal contact tracing within a timely manner. The district contact tracing team has an internal, confidential tracking spreadsheet that lists all the required information for positive cases, quarantined individuals, and pertinent timelines. Using this data, the district is able to submit required reports to the local health department for reporting.
- Schools should collaborate with the health department, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed COVID-19. Students, teachers, and staff with positive test results should isolate. Schools should report positive cases to the health department as soon as they are informed.
- Isolation should be used to separate people diagnosed with COVID-19 from those who are not infected. Students, teachers, and staff who are in isolation should stay home and follow the direction of the local public health authority about when it is safe for them to be around others. The district recommends isolation according to the positive covid-19 contact tracing protocols of confirmed Covid-19 cases with 5 days of isolation which at the end is symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.
- Contact tracing is currently in alignment with the latest COVID-19 Activity Level Reports that indicate current conditions of the pandemic. The District will continue to monitor this data and adjust protocols accordingly.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

- The district encourages families to monitor their children's daily symptoms. The district does not conduct random diagnostic Covid-19 testing within the student body or staff. Currently the district abides by the NJ Department of Health's symptom-based exclusion guidelines:
 - At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; OR
 - At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.
 - Symptoms include:
 - Fever over 100.4
 - Chills
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Body/muscle aches
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat

- Persistent cough
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

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

- The district will communicate with staff and students to provide opportunities for vaccination. The district works with the Riverside Medical Group to provide opportunities to vaccinate in the local area and will send out emails to the community to inform and encourage students and families to vaccinate.
- The district has and will continue if the opportunity arises, to provide vaccinations to identified staff through the Bergen County Vaccination Program.

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

- Federal and state disability laws, to the extent applicable, require an individualized approach for students with disabilities consistent with the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan. Educators and school leaders must remain aware of their obligations under federal and state disability laws and should also consider adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies, while maintaining efforts to protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

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)

Academic:

- 2023 Summer Learning Acceleration Program
 - Identified students in grades 9-12 in person program; Online learning platform for all students to use virtually in grades K-12
 - Funded through ESSER II, ARP, Title I
 - ELA, Math ·K-12; Science and Social Studies 2-8
 - Begin an elementary summer program
- After School Instruction
 - Reading and Math Interventionists
 - Evidence or Research Based Interventions/strategies
 - Students who need intense interventions and one on one tutoring
- Staff PD
 - Increase staff knowledge in critical areas of instruction (reading, writing, math, science) and assessments

Social, Emotional, Mental Health

- Continue partnership with Care Plus to provide individual, group and family therapy services, as well as staff consultation and professional

development

- Addition of a consultant to also work with parents, staff and students providing professional development, workshops, and group/individual counseling
- Continue to teach social emotional learning skills at the elementary level
- Continue to incorporate mindfulness and meditation activities into elementary, middle and high school PhysEd/Health

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)

06/06/21 The community will have multiple ways to access and comment on the district reopening plans for 2021. A draft plan is currently posted on the district website. In addition, at the June 16th board meeting, there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan at the board meeting. The district will collect all comments and use the information to modify plans in accordance with the current NJDOE regulations and NJ Department of Health safety guidance.

12/10/21 The district is posting a form under the plan on the district website that will allow the community to provide comments and feedback on the plan which will be used to modify the plan in accordance with the current NJDOE regulations and NJ Department of Health safety guidance.

03/07/2022 The district is posting a form under the plan on the district website that will allow the community to provide comments and feedback on the plan which will be used to modify the plan in accordance with the current NJDOE regulations and NJ Department of Health safety guidance.

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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)

- Written in plain language
- Translated into Spanish in a separate document
- Posted on the District home page
- Contact information posted under the document link for follow up and questions: Superintendent@lodi.k12.nj.us