



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: Little Falls Township Public Schools

Date: (06/18/2021)

Date Revised 08/11/2021, 02/11/2022, 12/19/2022

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

Governor Murphy lifted the universal mask mandate effective March 7, 2022. At this time, the Little Falls schools does not have a mask mandate. However we continue to monitor the local cases and look to our local health department as well as the NJ Department of Health for guidance.

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

At this time we are not utilizing physical distancing so as not to impede sound instructional practice. However we continue to follow the guidance of our school nurses and local health department for any uptick in COVID cases in which physical distancing may be utilized. We continue to monitor and look to the NJ Department of Health for guidance.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Hand Sanitizing stations continue to be in each room and there are hand sanitizers throughout each of our buildings. Hand washing practices continue to be reiterated and hands are washed after sneezing, blowing nose or coughing as well as before and after snack, recess and before and after lunch.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Routine cleaning and disinfection: Night custodial staff will begin their shift earlier (20 minutes prior to the instructional school day ending), providing assistance for routine cleaning and disinfecting in addition to routine cleaning and disinfecting will occur throughout the day. Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects/surfaces: 4 times a day all communal frequently touched objects/surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected Handrails, door handles and push plates, hallway light switches, water filling stations and elevator buttons. At the completion of each instructional school day all classrooms, hallways, offices, telephones, desktops, floors, shared areas and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized and BruTab sanitizing sprayer will be utilized as needed. Bathrooms will be cleaned frequently.

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

We continue to follow the NJ Department of Health recommendations in regards to contact tracing.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

We encourage parents to self-report systems and to have students see their doctors when their child is feeling ill.

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

In the past in order to provide eligible staff, students and community members with vaccine we have provided release time for staff to receive their COVID-19 vaccine, and worked cooperatively with the Clifton Health Department. We continue to distribute information about vaccine availability through Passaic County and work cooperatively with the Clifton Health Department.

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

We continue to work with school counselors, behaviorist and the psychologist to provide resources and interventions as necessary.

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).

For the 2022-2023 school year, we continue to operate on five days a week with full day instruction. SEL continues to be a priority providing student and staff supports. Multi-tiered systems will remain in place. Boost sessions are offered after school for students in need of academic support. I&RS meetings and supports continue to be in place for students identified as socially, emotionally, and/or academically at-risk. Gifted Talented sessions, programs, and competitions will continue. Lunch is served during assigned lunch periods and breakfast is offered every morning as well. The aftercare program started in September of 2021 and before care started in December of 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)

When there are changes, the LEA seeks public comment. The last changes were in February and public comment was sought at the January 18, 2022 Board Meeting and no feedback was given. The superintendent sends letters with any updates and changes when they occur. These letters are posted on the website. The Superintendent also holds Talk A Latte sessions for the public on a regular basis which is an open forum for feedback. There have no additional changes from the February plan update.

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 Safe Return Plan is posted on our district and school webpages. Our website is ADA compliant and also allows for easy translation to the native language of our community members. The website will also direct families and community members with ways to receive additional assistance. These will include contacting our Business Administrator, principals, Buildings and Grounds Manager, and/or Superintendent of Schools.