



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):

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
 - a. According to the Governor’s executive order 251, effective August 9, 2021 all NJ students, staff, and visitors must wear facemasks inside all schools buildings regardless of vaccination status.
 - b. If student has an illness that precludes them from wearing a face mask and medical or IEP documentation has been provided, they can:
 - i. Use a face shield
 - ii. Take mask off while seated behind desk shield
 - c. Accommodations will be made for extreme heat
 - i. Outdoor activities
 - ii. Mask breaks
 - d. Little Falls Township Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOH guidelines
 - e. Disposable face masks to distribute as needed

- B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)
 - a. Social Distancing in Instructional and Non-Instructional Rooms will be maintained to ensure the health and safety of students and staff

- b. Students will be separated by at least 3ft
- c. Desk shields will be placed in learning areas where requested by teacher.
- d. Coatrooms and cubbies will not be used.
- e. Physical barriers will be placed on all cafeteria tables.
- f. Students will be placed in hives. Each hive will have its own:
 - i. Entry and exit
 - ii. Bathrooms
 - iii. Water filling station

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- a. Hand sanitizing stations in each room
 - i. Hand Sanitizing
 - ii. Everyone will use hand sanitizer upon entering the building
 - iii. Everyone will use hand sanitizer upon entering their classroom
- b. Hand Washing
 - i. Where classroom sinks are available, hands must be washed upon entering the classroom for a minimum of 20 seconds
 - ii. Hands must be washed for a minimum of 20 seconds after sneezing, blowing nose or coughing
 - iii. Hands must be washed
 - 1. Before and after snack
 - 2. Before and after recess
 - 3. Before leaving for the day

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- a. Routine cleaning and disinfection
 - i. Night custodial staff will begin their shift earlier (20 minutes prior to the instructional school day ending), providing assistance for routine cleaning and disinfecting
 - ii. Routine cleaning and disinfecting will occur throughout the day
- b. Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects/surfaces
 - 1. 4 times a day all communal frequently touched objects/surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected Handrails
 - 2. door handles and push plates
 - 3. hallway light switches
 - 4. water filling stations

- 5. elevator buttons
 - ii. At the completion of each instructional school day all classrooms, hallways, offices, telephones, desktops, floors, shared areas and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized
 - iii. BruTab sanitizing sprayer will be utilized daily and more frequently as needed.
 - c. Bathrooms
 - i. Bathrooms will be cleaned every hour
 - d. District Custodial Procedure Manual details facility cleaning checklist and cleaning products.
 - e. HVAC
 - i. Appropriate MERV filters 7-13 have been purchased and installed
 - ii. All filters will be checked regularly to ensure they are operating efficiently and drawing in the required amount of fresh air.
 - iii. Staff will be trained during the first days of school on air protocols ie windows, HVAC settings, air conditioners...
 - iv. Three ActivePure Technology systems have been purchased to purify air
 - v. Needlepoint ionization has been installed in all buildings
- E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
- a. Screening Procedures for Students and Staff
 - i. Students and Staff will be visually checked for symptoms upon entering the building
 - ii. Covid Exposure Questionnaire for faculty/staff will be placed on REALTIME and must be completed:
 - 1. Within 24 hours of school day but no later than immediately prior to school starting each day
 - 2. When requiring a sick day
 - 3. Upon return from sick time
 - 4. If at any point exposure status changes
 - 5. If questionnaire is not complete, they must report directly to the nurse's office to do so
 - 6. Substitute teachers must complete questionnaire on Aesop prior to reporting to school
 - iii. Covid Exposure Questionnaire for students will be placed on Realtime.
 - 1. Questionnaire must be completed by parent/guardian within 24 hours of school day but no later than immediately prior to school starting each day
 - 2. When requiring a sick day
 - 3. Upon return from sick time
 - 4. If at any point exposure status changes
 - 5. If questionnaire is not completed as expected above, return to school is prohibited

b. Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff

- i. There is an isolation space within each health office and via an outdoor tented area.
- ii. If symptoms are present, Nurse will use discretion in conjunction with Clifton Health Department where necessary to determine if student is released from school
 1. If released from school, cannot return until Nurse's requirements are met which may include:
 - a. symptom free for 24 hours
 - b. medical clearance
 - c. completed re-entry Covid Exposure Questionnaire
- iii. When completing the daily COVID questionnaire, if a student is exhibiting two symptoms from A or one symptom from B, parents know to keep their child home.
- iv. A letter will be sent from the district nurses and administration to alert parents of symptom checking procedures as well as contact tracing protocol.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- a. Staff and student screening will take place prior to entering and upon entering the building.
- b. Staff and students will complete a screening checklist prior to arriving at school. This screening includes the checklist from page 15 of the new health guidelines.
- c. Each nurse will receive a report to identify those who indicated they were having any symptom, those who did not complete, and those who are cleared to attend.
- d. Nurses will first check to confirm that those with symptoms did not arrive and place them in isolation until pick up if they did.
- e. Nurses will then make sure that any incomplete checklist is completed.

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

- a. In order to provide eligible staff, students, and community members we have:
 - i. Provided release time for staff to receive their Covid-19 vaccine
 - ii. Worked cooperatively with our local health department (Clifton Health Department)
 1. Appointments were and continue to be made available for those eligible
 2. Through a collaboration with the Clifton Health Department and other medical facilities, several vaccine clinics were held and advertised through our district.
 - iii. Worked cooperatively with our local ShopRite
 1. Appointments were and continue to be made available for those eligible
 - iv. We continue to distribute information about vaccine availability throughout Passaic County

- H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies
 - a. Protocol for High Risk Students
 - i. Medical Documentation Required - If student has an illness that precludes them from wearing a face mask they can:
 1. Use a face shield instead of mask
 2. Take mask off while seated behind desk shield
 3. Child Study Team can work with families to determine the appropriate PPE and the district will provide
 - ii. School counselors, behaviorist, and psychologist 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).

This summer, we will be providing a THRIVE IN THE HIVE session. This program is free to our families and will run from June 28-July 29. Students will receive one hour of math instruction, one hour of ELA instruction, one hour of STEAM along with SEL, art, and physical education. Additionally, we will be running ESY (extended school year) and additional programs for our ELL learners.

The 2021-2022 school year will continue 5 days a week full day instruction. We have altered the schedules to include a rolling drop off period that provides multiple access points of entry (assigned by hive) as well as less congestion at each school site.

SEL will continue to be fostered with Ms. Alisha DeLorenzo providing student, staff, and parent supports. The district will continue to hold virtual Healthy Hornet meetings facilitated by district staff and CarePlus to address social and emotional topics and concerns. An additional School Psychologist has been hired to assist with the growing number of referrals.

Multi-tiered systems will remain in place. Boost sessions are offered before and 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.

Electives and extra-curricular offerings will be redeveloped based on student voice and choice. Additionally the addition of new technology hardware, infrastructure, and resources will play a role in execution.

Breakfast and lunch continue to be provided. Through the end of July, meals are being delivered to students. Prepackaged grab and go meals will be provided for students attending Thrive in the Hive. Beginning September, lunch will be served during assigned lunch periods. Breakfast will be offered each morning as well.

The district will be providing an aftercare program beginning September 2021. This service will be available until 5:30 pm each evening. There will be opportunities for students to participate in additional academic support, homework assistance, seasonal activities, physical activity, and other coordinated events.

Ultimately, the district will monitor NJDOE and NJDOH recommendations for social distancing and other best practice to identify facility needs.

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)

Little Fall Township Public Schools sought public comment in the development of the Safe Return Plan. Our Restart and Recovery Plan Committee met to assess the strengths and areas in need of development from the 2020-2021 school year. During this meeting, all gave input on the development of the Safe Reopening Plan. Additionally, we sought input from the general public and discussed the 8 components of the plan at our June 1st Board of Education meeting. In addition, the superintendent sent a survey to all staff and families allowing comments and ideas. On June 22, 2021 the plan, which will incorporate collected input to that point, will be presented and discussed at a public meeting. The plan will be placed on our website with instruction on how to make suggestions.

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 will be presented at our June 22, 2021 Board of Education Meeting. It will be 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.