



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: Fort Lee Public Schools

Date (06/24/2021): Date Revised (6/3/2024):

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

As per Governor Murphy's announcement on February 7, 2022, the Fort Lee School District made the wearing of masks in schools optional for all students, staff, outside providers, and visitors regardless of vaccination status starting on March 7, 2022. Any student, staff member, outside provider, or visitor may continue to wear a mask if they choose. The use of masks will be based on the Governor's Executive Orders and New Jersey Department of Health guidance. Should there be a change in either, the District will adjust its practices accordingly.

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

Based on the current data and the guidance issued by the NJ Department of Health, the District is not currently implementing physical distancing protocols. The District will adjust its practices accordingly if there are changes to the guidance issued.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The District will continue to promote practices that reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, such as frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Signs will be displayed around school buildings to remind staff and students to wash hands frequently. Soap and/or hand sanitizer are available in all classrooms, bathrooms, offices, and common areas. In limited cases, an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes will be used as alternatives to hand washing with soap and water if a sink is not available.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The District will adhere to current required cleaning practices and procedures to maintain a healthy environment. The District has developed a schedule and process to allow for routine cleaning and disinfecting. All spaces will continue to be cleaned daily by the custodial department using electrostatic spray applicators and botanical disinfectant. Bus companies will continue to follow the proper protocols for daily cleaning of buses. In order to maintain appropriate air quality standards, univent filters will be changed three times a year. Filters for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations. The District has installed air purification units in classrooms to further improve the air quality in its schools.

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

Based on the current data available and guidance issued by the CDC, the district will no longer implement contact tracing protocols. The District will adjust its practices accordingly if there are changes to the guidance issued by the NJ Department of Health.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day and keep their children home if they are feeling ill. As per the guidance issued by the NJ Department of Health, parents and students are expected to follow the guidance for exposure and positive cases. The same protocol applies to employees. Employees are expected to monitor their symptoms and not report to work if they are feeling ill. This information is subject to change based on updated guidance.

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

The District collaborated frequently with local health department officials to remain informed of vaccination sites and offerings and distributed this information to parents, students and staff.

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

Fort Lee Public Schools will follow guidelines for accommodations for children with disabilities as established by the NJ Department of Health, NJ Department of Education, as well as any relevant legislation or executive orders signed by the Governor of New Jersey for all students, educators, and other staff. This includes addressing individual student needs through IEPs, 504 Plans, individual medical plans, and other existing mechanisms as needed to ensure access to educational services for all eligible students.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address student's academic needs and students' and staff's emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

The District has resumed its full day instructional program and provides all services available to address students' academic, social, and behavioral needs. A number of programs will be offered to address student mental health and wellness such as counseling services before, during, and after school, integrating social-emotional learning and mindfulness exercises throughout the school day, and social group exercises for elementary students. Eligible students receive free and reduced lunch, even in the event of a school closure. Grant funds (ESSER, ARP ESSER, Title I) are allocated to provide students with additional academic and social-emotional support through during and extended school day activities.

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.

The District sought public comment on the plan at a public Board of Education meeting on June 6, 2023. The District welcomes feedback in response to its plan from parents, educators, and community members and those comments will be evaluated accordingly. Further, the District will post its plan on the District website for community members to view at their leisure. At any point, members of the community may submit feedback to the Assistant Superintendent's Office.

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is an understandable and uniform format to the extent practicable when 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 ADA, will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

The District's Safe Return Plan will be posted on the District website. The document itself will be provided, upon request, to parents with limited English proficiency translated in the parent's spoken language, where practicable, or in an alternative format for a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by ADA.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools.

The District will arrange professional development opportunities for staff so that they are prepared to meet the social, emotional, health, and academic needs of all students. Professional learning opportunities typically cover topics related to data analysis, lesson planning, curriculum implementation, differentiation, social-emotional learning strategies, and behavioral support for students. Our Coordinator of Data and Instructional Technology provides ongoing support to administrators, teachers, and staff. Technical assistance is always available to staff. Staff members in need of technical assistance submit requests for assistance through the District's IT School Dude system.