



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: Wanaque Public School District

Date (06/24/2021):

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

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

- Parents must provide a face covering for their child, daily
- Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth
- Face shields do not replace a face covering; they cannot be used interchangeably.
- Students can wear a face shield in addition to a face covering.
- Students will be required to wear face coverings:
 - At the bus stop and on the school bus to and from school
 - Coming into and out of the school building
 - Walking in the hallways
 - In the classrooms or any other room, when social distancing is not possible

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

- Students will have limited movement in the school building to ensure the "bubble" method is in place to reduce the interaction and intermingling of students.
- Students' desks will be spaced at least 3 ft. apart
- Individual desk shields will be utilized in each classroom
- Every hallway will be split into two lanes, indicating one-way travel.
- Every floor area will have markings to indicate 6 ft.
- Social Distancing on the bus as much as possible.
- Bus drivers and monitors will complete daily self-temperature and health checks.
- Students and adults will be required to wear face coverings while on the bus and waiting at bus stops.
- Windows will be open on the bus when appropriate to provide additional ventilation.
- Students will be assigned to a specific seat and required to sit there to and from school.
- The bus will be sanitized after each route is complete and students have exited the bus.
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C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Students will wash their hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including at the start of the day when children enter the classroom, before eating, after using the bathroom, before entering a new space, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
- Students will use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- All surfaces including classroom desks and chairs, doorknobs, handrails, water fountains (only the bottle filler will be used), as well as the bathrooms will be disinfected before, during the day, after school, and in the evening.
- All indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems. The recirculated air will have a fresh air component, windows will be opened, when practical, and filter (s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed monthly. All classrooms have A/C units and will be maintained to the highest degree.
- Recirculated air can be adjusted by an automated system as our needs change.
- GPS (Global Plasma Solutions) ionization systems (air scrubbers) will be installed in all classrooms.
- All classroom filters are replaced once per month and the rooftop units are replaced quarterly. Once GPS systems are installed in the classrooms (this summer) the units will be “equivalent” to MERV 13 filtered units. We have MERV 13 filters in all the rooftop units.

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

- In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, the district will follow protocols to determine who that person/student came in contact with.
- The school nurse will notify the local health department to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus.
- The Wanaque Health Department will determine the next step and recommendations.
All school and district administrators, as well as staff deemed appropriate, should be provided information regarding their role in the contact tracing protocol.
- The school safety specialist, Mr. Charles Frick, will take the three hours of training through Johns Hopkins University’s COVID-19 Contact Tracing course.

The contact tracing policy should:

- Be developed in consultation with the District Physician, Wanaque Health Department, and nurses employed by the Board.
- Identify the criteria an individual must meet to activate the Board’s contact tracing policy.
- Clearly describe the school or District’s responsibilities regarding notification of its local health department; staff, families, and the public.
- Identify the school or District’s role in assisting its Wanaque Health Department to conduct contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.

- Ensure adequate information and training is provided to school and District staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them under the policy.
- Adhere to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding the privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA).
- The designation of a staff liaison or liaison responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components of the Board's contact tracing policy could help ensure that notifications are carried out promptly and responsibly.
- Open communication systems that allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure could assist school districts to provide the prompt notification.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Wanaque School District understands that implementing social distancing practices in all instructional and non-instructional spaces is critical to ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. As noted with specificity below, student desks and seating in the District will be separated by at least six feet to the maximum extent practicable, and in instances where physical distancing is not feasible or is difficult to maintain, additional protective measures will be employed.
- Pass by the Rapid Temperature Screening Kiosks at the entrances, a temperature of 100.4, or HIGHER, he/she will be sent to the cool-down room, where the temperature will be taken again by handheld no-touch thermal thermometers. After a five-minute cool-down time if the temperature persists at 100.4 or higher parents(s) will be called and asked to pick up the student from school.
- Morning duty staff member will monitor the Rapid Temperature Screening Kiosks red/green indicators
- Green means proceed to class, Red means required wait period before rechecking in the cool-down room
- Cool-down Room will be located in each building as listed below:
 - Wanaque - Room 51
 - Haskell - Room 106

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

Emails sent out to notify of available vaccine sites

January 7, 2021 link for covidvaccine.nj.gov sent

March 8, 2021 Vaccine Eligibility for Educators flyer

March 9, 2021, scheduling efforts for Moderna survey for the town nurse

March 16, 2021, Available through Vault

March 27, 2021, Atlantic Health available appointments

March 29, 2021 - educators to register for the COVID 19 Vaccine to be administered Saturday, April 3, 2021, at Passaic County Technical and Vocational School

March 31, 2021, Walgreen Passaic Pop Up Vaccination

April 1, 2021 Vaccine available announcement

April 21, 2021 Employee announcement for PCCC walk-in vaccinations

May 19, 2021 blackboard announcement

May 31, 2021, Pfizer vaccinations for ages 12+

June 3, 2021, sent flyer for the Passaic County Board of Commissioners on COVID-19 Vaccine Distributions

June 14, 2021, we distributed a document from the Wanaque Borough Public Health Nurse, Bernie McDevitt, which included support documentation regarding *“what fully vaccinated people can safely do”*.

June 22, 2021, West Milford Presbyterian Church Walk-in Vaccine Clinic Flyer sent out

The Borough of Wanaque has been posting information about available vaccine sites on their digital information signs located at Ringwood Avenue/Union Avenue, the Public Library, and the Municipal Building.

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

- Preschool Autism and Primary Autism will return to pre-Covid in-person schedules of 8:45 – 3:16.
- The classroom will be cleaned at the end of the day.
- OT, PT, Speech will all be provided in-person in accordance with IEP’s.
- Middle School Autism Program will return to the pre-Covid in-person schedule of 8:45 -3:16.
- The Behavioral Disabilities program will return to a pre-Covid in-person schedule of 8:45 -3:16.
- The LLD programs will return to the pre-Covid in-person schedule of 8:45 -3:16.
- The Integrated Preschool, at each building, will return to pre-Covid in-person split sessions of 9:00-11:30 and 12:30-3:00.
- The classroom will be cleaned in between groups.
- Parents of medically fragile students or those with health impairments will be contacted by their case managers to ascertain if there are any concerns for re-entry to in-person learning.
- Students have been continually monitored by their program teachers and all accommodations and medical supports as outlined in their IEP’s will be in place for the re-opening.
- School nurses are continually updated as to changes in treatment or medical plans.
- Transportation companies have been notified as to protocols for bus safety in conjunction with CDC recommendations.
- Case managers have been collaborating with teachers, therapists, and parents to maintain students' current levels of functioning.
- Progress reporting of goals and objectives delineated in IEP’s will be utilized to focus on current levels of functioning
- Related services will be provided in-person by all therapists as outlined in IEP’s.
- Service providers will provide progress reports based on individual goals and objectives to assess current levels of functioning.
- IEP teams will continue to complete in-person student evaluations taking the necessary precautions, maintain timelines, determine eligibility, and provide programming.
- Procedures for student referrals following N.J.A.C. and federal guidelines are communicated through student handbooks, staff, and I&RS teams at the building levels.

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.

Students' academic needs will be identified through analysis of assessment data such as end-of-year standard-based assessments, diagnostic assessments, as well as informal assessments, and teacher observations from the year prior. Once academic needs are identified, students will receive strong, evidence-based core instruction, as well as Tier 2 or Tier 3 support based on needs. Evidence-based interventions will be put in place for students based on needs and monitored throughout to address learning gaps. With the additional interventionists hired by the district, more students will be able to receive support based on their individual needs. To address students' and staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs, staff will continue to receive training on topics specific to post-pandemic trauma, mental health, and inclusivity. Training will be provided by mental health professionals and educators will be able to use skills taught in their classrooms. Additionally, students and staff will be provided services and support based on needs identified through surveys and observations.

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.

The District sought public comment on the Safe Return Plan on several occasions. At each of these meetings, the Interim Superintendent shared the details of the template for the District plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service through a slide presentation on the following dates:

- Board of Education Committee Meetings on May 25, 2021
- Faculty meetings on June 2, 2021
- Digital Parent forum on June 3, 2021
- In-person Board of Education Meeting on June 15, 2021

As of late winter and early spring, the Wanaque School District introduced a plan sequence to return to a five-day-a-week in-person instruction for all grade levels with approximately 25% of the students remaining on a 100% virtual schedule.

For September 2021, the District plans to return to full-day in-person instruction including lunch for all students. All health and safety guidelines will be continued, including mask-wearing if still mandated.

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.

Currently, the District communicates to the families on a daily basis in both English and Spanish. These communication documents include important reminders of virtual attendance guidelines and daily schedule information. The parents understand our simple format and are seemingly comfortable with our communication.

Similarly, the Safe Return Plan will follow the Template: District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service. This plan will be posted on the District Website in both languages. Concurrently, on June 24, 2021, the parents will be notified through our daily announcements about the posting of the Safe Return Plan.

Through this communication, we will inquire about the need for large print, braille, audio versions, or translations into languages other than Spanish. Upon request, these options will be available to parents.