



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: Palisades Park Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): June 2, 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

Face covering mandates will be implemented in accordance with all local, state, and CDC guidelines and in consultation with the local Board of Health. Students and staff may be required to wear face masks pending current Executive Orders when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health. Parents and caregivers have received training on universal and correct wearing of face coverings through our Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG.) PPE will be provided to students and staff by the district as needed. The district will continue to provide reasonable accommodations for face covering protocol. Internal and external signage has been posted and will remain in and around school buildings to reinforce social distancing and appropriate use of face coverings in accordance with local, state, and federal mandates.

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

Schools will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable based on current local, state, and CDC guidelines and Executive Orders, and in consultation with the local Board of Health, to minimize the transmission on COVID-19. Additional modifications may be implemented, including using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction, and/or having students sit on only one side of a table in order to comply with the most current local, state, and federal requirements. Alternate eating areas may be established and paired with staggered eating times to decrease the numbers of individuals in a given area. Common areas that cannot accommodate social distancing, such as

hallways, stairwells, and entrances/exits, have been specifically marked to provide one-way or limited access to students and staff throughout the day. All district spaces have been labeled with appropriate floor, wall, and ceiling signage.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The district will comply with recommendations from local and state agencies when implementing handwashing and respiratory etiquette measures to reduce the potential transmission of COVID-19. Handwashing supplies are stocked in each hand washing location, and hand sanitizing stations will be provided for students and staff inside of each office in each building, outside of each bathroom, and by each entrance/exit of the school. Additional hand sanitizing stations will be provided at the ends of hallways and throughout the buildings' common areas, including the cafeteria. Students should wash or sanitize their hands prior to coming in contact with food and/or drink at snack and lunch time. Students will be given time for handwashing breaks in compliance with local, state, and CDC recommendations. Signage citing appropriate respiratory etiquette ("Cover Your Cough," etc.) will be posted throughout district buildings.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

District maintenance staff has completed an audit of each window in the district and repairs have been completed to ensure that each classroom has properly functioning windows ensuring fresh air exchange. Continued maintenance is being performed on existing HVAC systems. Those found to be insufficient will not be used until remediated. All custodial and maintenance personnel have been trained on the importance of proper sanitizing and cleaning of school buildings. District custodians will continue to maintain and track all disinfection and cleaning of spaces via a cleaning log affixed to the door of each office, classroom, and non-instructional space. The school district will continue to maintain a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces, including school entrances, exits, handrails, doors, light switches, and common areas. Custodial protocols and cleaning procedure manual will be posted to the district website upon approval of this plan.

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

The district will continue to comply with all local, state, and CDC recommendations when contact tracing is required in combination with isolation and quarantine. Upon any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, the building nurse and administration will compile all pertinent information regarding potential contact the student or staff member may have had with others in the district. The district will make closure decisions in consultation with the Board of Health on a case by case basis whenever a positive test result is disclosed either to the district by an individual, or through the Department of Health. All school closures will follow recommended local, state, and CDC guidelines. Any student or staff member exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be respectfully, safely, and discreetly escorted for assessment where our COVID-19 protocol will begin.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

All staff will be required to complete a daily self-assessment through our district-wide mobile symptom screening app, and parents will complete a daily assessment of their child's health and wellbeing prior the start of each school day. All appropriate and applicable reasonable accommodations will be made to provide the same or similar access to symptom screenings for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (including translation support).

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

Announcements regarding vaccination eligibility and availability for educators, other staff, and students have been communicated in partnership with the local and county Board of Health via email and website posting, and will continue to be shared through these channels as updates are made. School nurses will continue to work with families to facilitate the necessary steps to coordinate vaccine appointments for staff and eligible students with local and county health departments.

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

In accordance with local, state, and CDC guidelines, and in compliance with the local Board of Health, in the event that a mask is required but cannot be safely worn, additional PPE will be provided if there will be physical interaction or a safe distance cannot be reasonably maintained. All appropriate and applicable reasonable accommodations will be made to provide the same or similar access to PPE and symptom screenings for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (including translation support).

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)

All students are projected to be back in school for full-time, in-person instruction for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. While school districts will be required to fully open buildings beginning Fall 2021, remote learning will be permitted in the event that there is a localized outbreak or other emergency as recommended by local, state, and federal officials. If buildings are open for in-person instruction, parents or guardians will not be able to opt children out of in-person instruction as allowed for the 2020-2021 school year. Additional mental health supports will be in place to address student and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, including continuing partnerships with third-party mental health providers, county agencies, and community partners. Food service will be available to all students serving breakfast and lunch daily, and supplemental meals will be provided through partnerships with local agencies.

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)

This plan will be presented for board and public comment on June 17, 2021 and will be available on the district website pending submission.

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 Reopening Plan will be published on the District website, and will be accessible in multiple languages to ensure consistent communication with our students, families, and community. This plan may also be orally translated/recited upon request, or an alternative format may be provided to ensure accessibility.