



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: Atlantic City Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/17/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/09/2021 *Revisions in Red

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

- Per CDC guidance, child care centers and facilities, youth summer camps, and public, private, and parochial preschool program premises and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, continue to be governed by existing requirements.
- Staff, students and visitors are required to wear face masks unless they will inhibit the individual's health or if the individual is under the age of two years.
 - If a visitor refuses to wear a face mask due to non-medical reasons, the school/district facility will refuse entry.
- Accommodations should be addressed for students who are unable to wear a face covering.
 - Exceptions to wearing a face covering:
 - doing so would inhibit the individual's health
 - the individual is in extreme heat outdoors
 - the individual is in water
 - the student has a documented medical condition, or disability, reflected in an IEP

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

- require 3 feet of social distancing to the maximum extent practicable in **all** locations (includes student seating).
- provide protective measures such as physical barriers, sitting on one side of the table spaced apart and/or desks facing one direction where 3 feet distancing is not feasible.
- keep child's belongings labeled and separated from others.

- increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible unless it poses a health or safety risk to children.
- utilize larger rooms such as cafeterias, gyms, media centers and auditoriums to allow for social distancing.
- keep classes together in cohorts.
- allow minimal mixing between groups.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette:
 - promote and ensure 20 second hand washing before eating, after bathroom use, after blowing nose/sneezing, coughing.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
 - Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
 - provide hand sanitizing stations (**60% alcohol**) in each classroom, all entrances/exits, near lunchroom, near toilets, near handwashing stations (children under 5 must be supervised).
 - add time to recess and lunch periods to ensure students have time to wash their hands.
 - embed the practice of handwashing throughout the day, inside and outside the classroom (e.g. field trips).
 - hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Facilities Cleaning Practices

Atlantic City Public Schools developed and implemented a procedure manual for increased cleaning and has established a disinfecting schedule in order to maintain a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting

ACBOE Custodial Staff will clean and disinfect at least daily (more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched and shared surfaces and objects.

Improving Ventilation - There are various repairs and replacements of rooftop units, air handling units, control upgrades and other ventilation projects planned for our schools of need. They are all within our Long Range Facility Plan that will be completed within the next two years. The ESSER monies has permitted the district to accelerate the completion of these projects.

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

- Two ACPS School Nurses are paid, after hours as the Medical Advisory Committee, to conduct contact tracing, communicate with the local health department and keep current with COVID-19 data.
- The nurses on the Medical Advisory Committee follow all NJ DOH guidelines and have created and maintained Standard Operating Procedures

and Protocols. All nurses within the district receive ongoing training on all new procedures. Parents are contacted immediately and notified on our school protocol.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Currently, ACPS does not offer COVID testing. ACPS does provide information on the availability of testing sites within the community for staff and families. COVID protocols have been distributed to building administrators, who have educated their staff.
- Screenings are completed as the students/staff enter the building and informally during the day. Nurses are contacted immediately if there are any questions or concerns.
- Standard operating procedures are frequently updated as new guidelines from the DOH/DOE are distributed.
- Updated information is conveyed to the staff, students and parents.

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

- The City of Atlantic City houses a COVID-19 megasite for vaccinations at the old convention center. We allow staff to leave during the workday if they have a vaccination appointment.
- **In conjunction with the Atlantic County Health Department**, information was provided to eligible families concerning the COVID-19 vaccine **via website and social media**. We will continue to provide education to our families.

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

- While the goal of Atlantic City Public Schools is to keep everyone healthy and safe by following CDC, NJDOH and NJDOE, we do understand that for some students with disabilities, this may be difficult. We provide clear masks for our preschool disabled students, students with autism, **auditory** impaired students, **ML** students and staff. The case managers work with students' physicians, our nurses and teachers if the students are unable to wear a mask to ensure safety for the students and staff.
- Individual needs are addressed in each student's IEP.

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.

Atlantic City students, staff, and families will be supported through training, tools, and resources to ensure a consistent, high-quality education for all children.

Instructional Design:

- Facilitate standards-aligned instruction to ensure students grow toward mastery of grade-level outcomes
- Monitor student progress to offer targeted interventions
- Identify and address unfinished learning through a dedicated period for intervention and enrichment
- Focus on priority and essential NJSL standards
- Differentiated instruction, accommodations/modifications to support diverse learning needs

Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports Social Emotional Learning and School Culture and Climate

- Social and emotional support for students and staff
- Promote a positive school climate and culture
- Add two full-time social workers to address student mental health needs
- Parent Outreach and Engagement specialists work with families to support student learning and emotional well-being

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.

- May 27, 2021-June 16, 2021 -The district conducted a survey utilizing topics within this plan and section for public comment and input. The survey was sent via Blackboard, and posted to the district website. The results of the survey are posted to the District webpage.
- June 10, 2021-June 24, 2021 - Upon completion and analysis of the public survey on June 16, the meeting with District Administrators on June 10 and the meeting with the ACEA Union on June 17th, the information was compiled into the “Safe Return Plan” to be submitted by the deadline.
- June 17, 2021 - Safe return plan was submitted in EWEG
- July 20, 2021 - District Administration will present a brief overview of its “Safe Return Plan” to the community at the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting. The public will be notified via the District webpage and social media. The public will be invited to comment on the presentation.

v. June 28, 2021, **September 21, 2021** - District Administration will present to the Board of Education any changes

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.

- The majority of this document is written using bullets and chunked information instead of lengthy narratives that are difficult for families to read and understand.
- Important documents will be provided in both English and Spanish, translated by employees proficient in both languages.
- All students have a Chromebook and assistive technology, such as a Chrome Vox, to help families access and understand the plan.
- Families are encouraged to ask questions in any format available: in person, by email, at the school Parent Resource Centers and at Board of Education meetings.
- Translators will be identified throughout the District to assist with translating the document with parents that have limited English proficiency.
- Accessibility - This document will be added to the District website after being run through an accessibility check that will make it ADA compliant. The District website includes information for website accessibility including contact information for those experiencing problems.

Additional question in EWEG:

Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (0 of 1000 maximum characters used)

The district has developed a calendar and plan to systematically deliver professional learning for teachers and administrators.

- Full-day professional development
- Half-day professional development
- After school initial training in English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Summer institutes
- On-site coaching

All professional learning embeds technical assistance so that staff is exposed and trained in the most current pedagogical methods, tools, and materials.