



# 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

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LEA Name: Garfield Public Schools

Date Revised July 19, 2022

## 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.

### VACCINATION MANDATE

#### Executive Order 253 Vaccine or Testing Requirements

Until modified or revoked, this Executive Order requires all workers and regularly scheduled volunteers in a preK-12 school setting to submit proof of full vaccination or submit to COVID testing at least once or twice a week beginning on October 18, 2021. The Order applies to both full-time and part-time employees, contractors, regular volunteers, and others working in the school grounds of the school covered by this Executive Order. The term “covered workers” is defined as including but not limited to administrators, teachers, educational support professionals, individuals providing food, custodial, and administrative support services, substitute teachers (direct employees or contracted), contractors, providers and any individuals performing work at the school whose job duties require them to make regular visits to the school including volunteers.” Visitors or those individuals who perform one-time or limited-duration services, repairs or construction are not considered covered workers.

#### **A. Universal and correct wearing of masks**

The Garfield District is implementing a mask optional protocol.

AS PER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NJDOH, Staff and students who remain in school and identified as close contacts with Test to Stay are required to wear masks for ten days. Students and staff members who return to school after isolation and/or quarantine must wear a mask at all times, including when outdoors, during days 6-10. District will review data on a regular basis and consider requiring masking again during an active outbreak and during periods of elevated community transmission, particularly if there is difficulty incorporating other layered prevention strategies, such as adequate ventilation and social distancing. The district reviews all updated recommendations from the CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE and will confer with our local Health Department, Mid-Bergen Regional Health Commission to make changes to the protocols based on community outbreaks, new and relevant guidance, and feedback from stakeholders.

#### **B. PHYSICAL DISTANCING** (e.g., including the use of cohorts/podding)

As outlined in Covid-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools, schools should implement physical distancing to the maximum degree that allows for in person learning. Social distancing in classrooms, cafeteria, and hallways will be enforced to the greatest extent possible. Students will enter and exit schools using multiple doors to avoid crowding when practicable. Signage will remain in place to reinforce social distance and traffic flow.

**C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

Hand sanitizer (60 % ethyl alcohol) will be provided in every classroom and instructional room as well as offices in every school. School nurses will reinforce importance of handwashing and social distancing with each class. The district will maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% ethyl alcohol) in each classroom, bathroom, main office, food areas, entrances and exits. The District promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; optional use of face coverings; and signs and messages in and around school buildings and offices.

**D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

Classrooms and offices are regularly cleaned daily and sanitized and then sprayed with Bioesque, an EPA approved disinfectant spray that kills viruses including Covid 19. Air Flow / windows will be kept open to the greatest extent possible given weather conditions. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are provided in all classrooms and offices. High touch areas and bathrooms will be cleaned regularly. All classrooms/ bathrooms/ offices have a portable HEPA/ultraviolet systems unit to enhance indoor air cleaning.

**E. Contact tracing is conducted by the local Health Department in collaboration with the Garfield School District.**

Upon notification that a student or staff member has tested positive for Covid 19 , the local health department will be notified by the Nursing Supervisor and identify close contacts.

*The Garfield District will implement the Test to Stay (TTS) protocol that allows asymptomatic individuals who meet the criteria for quarantine to continue in person learning and or teaching. If an individual presents symptom consistent with Covid -19, that person is placed in the isolation room. An individual who had Covid19 may return to school or work after the recommended days of isolation from the date of the positive test or first day of symptoms. The district will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC and NJDOH Recommendations for K-12 Schools to determine return to school protocols.*

**F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

The district collaborates with the city, county, and local Health department to identify and communicate sources of testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to Covid -19. The district continues to comply with E.O. 253 and provides on site testing through Meadowlands Diagnostics for staff members who choose to use the service.

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

The district also provides information on vaccine opportunities to both employees and students/families via posted flyers on the district and school websites, emails from Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Bergen County Superintendent’s Office, HUMC, and all other providers that offer vaccine information. Since the Garfield District has a collaborative agreement with Hackensack University Medical Center, additional informational opportunities are made available to the students, staff, and families through Teams meetings, brochures, and on site vaccinations for students and residents.

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

The school district continues to meet their obligations under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey State special education regulations for students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. Mask Accommodations will be made for students with medical conditions if masking is a requirement at any point in the future. Students with disabilities may have access to clear desk barriers , special masks, and/or face shields. Accommodations are provided for students with a medical condition, IEPs and/or 504 plans as well as any person that the CDC identifies as being at higher-risk for severe illness from Covid-19.

**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.

The district has identified certain needs that will be funded by the CRRSA-ESSER II grant that provides a continuation of services for students impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. District continues to provide internet access via a service provider to students who do not have a service provider in their home. As part of the one-to-one initiative, all students were issued a device for remote and in-person instruction. The district has upgraded the technology through purchasing Promethean Boards for all classrooms , upgrading computer labs to innovation STEAM Labs at the elementary level, plans to construct an outdoor learning lab at the middle school level, and upgrading both the media center and TV production studio at the High School . Extended learning programs include summer academic and enrichment programs at all levels, as well as after school tutoring, extra- curricular, and SEL programs. Additional staff members have been hired to support SEL, including SAC Wellness counselors at the middle school and high school, two additional social workers from Thrive Alliance, and additional counselors at the elementary level. Free meals will continue to be provided to all students if the SSO option is extended to include the 2022-23 school year.

## 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:**

The Safe Return to In-Person Plan and Continuity of Service Template will be approved by the Garfield Board of Education at the July 2022 Board Meeting. The District Restart Committee established the initial plan and will continue to review and update every six months or as necessary. The Restart Committee is comprised of the district medical director, District Administrators, teachers, representatives of the teacher's union, representatives of the Local 560 (secretaries and custodians), parents, students, and Board of Education Members. Public comment is solicited through the committee as well as at the BOE meeting during the Public Comment section.

- B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practical written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practical 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 defined by the ADA, will be provided in an alternate format accessible to that parent.**

The Plan is currently posted on the district website, [www.gboe.org](http://www.gboe.org) and updated versions are posted immediately after board approval. This plan will be posted on July 26, 2022. For those members of the public whose first language is not English, there is availability to translate to alternative languages. An alternate format will be provided to any individual as requested.

PLAN MUST BE POSTED ON LEA WEBSITE. INSERT AT VERY END OF BOARD APPROVED SAFE REOPENING PLAN DOCUMENT THE FOLLOWING:

**BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 7/25/2022**

CSA NAME: ANNA SCIACCA

CSA SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: 7/25/22