



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: Kearny Public Schools, Kearny, NJ

Date : June 21, 2021

Date Revised ():

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

KSD will continue to require the consistent and correct use of [well-fitting](#) face [masks](#) with proper filtration by all students, teachers, staff, and visitors. Masks should be worn at all times, by all people in school facilities and during KSD provided transportation services. Face shields are not a substitute for masks.

Exceptions to requirements for face coverings shall be as follows:

- Doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- The individual is in extreme heat outdoors.
- The individual is in water.
- A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an IEP, precludes the use of face covering.

Removal of masks may be permissible with certain exceptions for certain people approved by KSD, or for certain settings or activities, such as while eating or drinking. Masks should be required in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including hallways, school offices, restrooms, gyms, auditoriums, etc.

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

KSD will continue to implement physical distancing measures to the greatest extent possible as directed by the regional risk matrix level based on the NJDH COVID -19 CALI and Variant Surveillance report weekly data on school property and school maintained transportation services.

In a low or moderate risk designation, a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students will be maintained in classrooms with strict adherence to mask-wearing.

6 feet of physical distancing will continue to be the minimum maintained in the following scenarios:

- For middle and high schoolers when regional risk is high (orange).
- Between staff members in the school building and between staff members and students.
- In common areas, such as school lobbies and auditoriums.
- When masks can't be worn, such as when eating.
- During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, sports, or exercise (even if masks are worn).

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

KSD will continue to enforce established handwashing protocols and promote a culture of hand hygiene based on CDC and NJDH guidelines including, Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not readily available:

- Upon arrival at school
- Before and after meals and snacks
- After going to the bathroom
- Before leaving for the day
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into tissue;
- When hands are visibly soiled

Respiratory etiquette measure will be reinforced with students, teachers, and staff including:

- Covering mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- If tissue is unavailable, use of elbow, not hand, to cough or sneeze into
- Disposal of tissues after use
- Immediate washing of hands after blowing nose, coughing , or sneezing

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- KSD will continue to maintain and Improve ventilation to the greatest extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants, by the use of:
- Bringing in as much outdoor air as possible.
- Ensuring that Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) settings are maximizing ventilation.
- Filter and/or clean the air in the school by improving the level of filtration as much as possible.
- Using exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens where possible.
- Opening windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk.

Regularly clean high touch surfaces and objects (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.

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

KSD School Nursing Staff will continue to quickly prepare for and respond to cases and exposures of COVID-19 by providing case investigation measures and contact tracing of staff, educators, and students to identify, notify, and isolate cases and notify, test, and quarantine close contacts to reduce transmission. Isolation and quarantine timelines will be instituted based on CDC Guidance, NJBH, and KBH guidelines and directed by the regional risk matrix level based on the NJDH COVID -19 CALI and Variant Surveillance report weekly data. Preparation and response will also include, but not be limited to: providing isolation of suspected cases awaiting pick up, reporting to KDH, intervention to control clusters, examination of testing and vaccine strategies, knowledge of applicable legislation, regulations, guidelines, and policies, establish roles and responsibilities for support staff, provide COVID-19 education as needed, use of technology tools to improve efficiency and evaluation.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

KSD will strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff due to illness. Parents/caregivers will continue to be encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. As per the NJDOH, KSD will continue with a daily symptom screening for students and staff. The screener is made available to students and staff and they are responsible for completion prior to entrance

onto school property daily. Additionally, on site screening for the following symptoms will be continued, as will use of temperature kiosks at all property entrances. If temperature kiosks are unavailable, hand held thermometers will be utilized.

At all levels of community transmission, KSD will require testing of and assist in the location of diagnostic testing services to any student, teacher, or staff member who is exhibiting [symptoms of COVID-19](#) at school or has reported symptoms occurring outside of school.

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

KSD will continue to promote vaccination of teachers, school staff, and eligible students and support messaging and outreach about vaccination for members of school communities . KSD will provide education regarding vaccination and timely links to vaccine distribution information, sites, schedules, as we are provided that information from governing agencies including NJDOH and KDOH. We will continue to utilize school communication platforms to encourage vaccination of household members of school-age children as they become eligible. We will include outreach in a language that limited English proficient family members of students can understand and in alternate formats as needed to facilitate effective communication for individuals with disabilities. We will continue to coordinate local clinics with both Hudson County and KBOH to provide opportunities for vaccination of students and staff. We will allow excused absences for the purposes of vaccination.

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

In addition to KSD's general obligation to ensure the health and safety of its students and staff pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-6 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1, all appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities will be honored including all medically fragile students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students with complex disabilities with IEPs, and/or students who require accommodations under a Plan in accordance with the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan).

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 will continue to receive services to the fullest extent possible in whatever capacity is determined to be safe by the NJDOE and CDC.

In addition to delivering the core content curriculum, wraparound supports will continue to address the needs of the most vulnerable students:

- Child Study Team members will continue to be in close contact with at risk students.
- Counselors will remain in close contact with students exhibiting frequent absences, failing grades, and concerning behaviors identified by teachers.
- District leadership will continue to support teachers, families, and students as needs arise.
- Food services will be provided throughout the summer and school year at numerous locations around the district to address food insecurity.

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 reached out to stakeholders representing an array of school/community members. A list of allowable uses was provided to the stakeholders and the group focused on discussing the most critical needs of the district in response to the pandemic. The group was provided with a brief overview of how the funds were allocated for the other ESSER funds received (CARES and CRRSAA) in an effort for the participants to know what areas of need had already been addressed. The group discussed the benefits and challenges related to proposed uses of the ESSER III funds.

The district will make an ongoing effort to seek public comment should any major changes need to be made related to how the funds are allocated.

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.

In an effort to maintain an understandable and uniform format, the district utilized the Safe Reopening Plan template located on the NJDOE's American Rescue Plan website. This template clearly identifies each section and subsection of the plan.

To address the needs of multilingual families, the plan was posted to the district's website in a manner in which parents could use the "translate" feature on the website to translate the text into over one hundred languages. Should the need arise for oral translations or requests made by individuals with disabilities, the district will use all the resources at its disposal to meet the requested needs of parents.