



## 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: Wharton Borough Public School District

Date (05/30/2021):

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

Universal and correct wearing of masks: The Wharton Borough Public School District will follow the most current recommendations of the NJ Department of Health, the Wharton Department of Health and the NJ Department of Education regarding the wearing of face coverings. The primary source of guidance regarding face coverings can be found here. [Click here.](#)

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, the Wharton Borough Public School District will plan to follow the recently announced Department of Education announcement that “No more requirements for social distancing as of Friday [5/28/21], indoor or out, and no indoor gathering limits as of June 4, 2021. The district will continue to recommend social distancing throughout our summer programming and maintain the same to completion of the 2020-2021 school year. The Wharton Borough Public School District will continue ongoing consultation with our local Department of Health and follow their guidance and recommendations, while also abiding by any CDC recommendations and Executive Orders.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The Wharton Borough Public School District will continue to follow guidelines and recommendations issued by the CDC, Department of Education and our local Department of Health. The District will also continue to promote handwashing via visible postings and wall hangings in addition to staff reminders.

As to respiratory etiquette, the district has a brand new HVAC system installed in the Alfred C. MacKinnon Middle School. Air Purifiers have been added to HVAC units in all school facilities. The Wharton Borough Public School District is in the process of securing the installation of replacement exhaust fans throughout our facilities. Additionally, a new air conditioning unit is being installed over the Board of Education and Child Study Team Offices. A window replacement project is planned for the elementary school, providing more opportunities to bring fresh air into individual classrooms.

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

The Wharton Borough Public School District has secured additional custodial staff assigned specifically to clean “high touch surfaces” throughout the school day. Hand sanitizer will be made available to begin the 2021-2022 school year along with disinfecting wipes. The district will also continue to “spray” classrooms with electrostatic applicator machines to ensure cleanliness. All HVAC units including filters will be cleaned by a contracted service during the 2021 summer and inspected monthly for any necessary cleaning and/or maintenance.

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

The Wharton Borough Public School District will follow the most current recommendations of the NJ Department of Health, the Wharton Department of Health and the NJ Department of Education regarding contact tracing, isolation and quarantining. The school district will continue the maintenance of an “isolation room” to separate any student or staff members displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

#### F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The Wharton Borough Public School District will continue to follow the guidance and recommendations of the CDC, local Department of Health, and Department of Education.

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

The Wharton Borough Public School District has already offered to and secured for vaccination appointments for all staff members wanting and willing to participate. The district will follow guidance from the CDC and our local Department of Health regarding student vaccinations and advertise any opportunities to student families.

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

The Wharton Borough Public School District will continue to support the needs and disabilities through appropriate Child Study Team and 504 accommodations.

## **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 Wharton Borough Public School District will provide multiple learning acceleration and social emotional learning opportunities for our students. In Summer 2021, in addition to our annual programming, "in-person" instructional settings will be available to students for both elementary and middle

school levels. Students will also be afforded the opportunity to actively participate in online classes, through a private provider, for course recovery or enrichment. The district has also contracted with tutoring services, to further support our students this summer and beyond. Learning Acceleration Coaches will work with individual students, in concert with other provisions, to provide necessary academic and social emotional supports. Lastly, the district will be securing fulltime clinicians to support our students, provide professional development to staff, and to meet and work with student families. The district will continue to provide free meal service to our students during the year and throughout the summer.

### **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 Wharton Borough Public School District reconvened its “Road Back: Restart and Recovery” team to provide feedback and comment on this plan. This team consists of members of the administrative team, staff members, Wharton Board of Education, our local Department of Health, Office of Emergency Management, custodial staff, Wharton Police Department, school nurse, and student families. This plan will also be shared at a public meeting of the Board of Education and will be opened for comment at 60-day revision periods.

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.

This plan will be posted on our district website in both English and Spanish and will be made available, in other appropriate formats, when requested. Our “Parent Liaison” will be available to any Spanish speaking family to provide explanation and answer questions. Our administrative team and school nurse will be available for further explanation and clarification.