



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: Bergen Arts & Science Charter School

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/14/2021

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, masks will still be required of students and adults in our school buildings. We will follow the guidance of the CDC, as well as the governor. As of right now, we are requiring masks for students and staff in K-12. We will make amendments to this as more updates are provided throughout the summer and early fall.

To ensure the correct wearing of masks, adults will lead by example. Additionally, we have age appropriate posters throughout the school buildings to serve as a visual guide to the expectation of mask wearing.

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, we will no longer offer a hybrid or remote education option. We expect all of our students, grades K-12, to be in person. To ensure the safety of all, we will continue with a three feet distance between students, until advised otherwise.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Our schools have age appropriate posters that display in pictures and words the proper etiquette for washing hands and for covering a cough or a sneeze. Additionally, there are signs in the Nurse's Office, and proper etiquette is discussed in health classes.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

District wide our attention to cleaning and maintain healthy facilities has improved over the past year. We have created a cleaning schedule that must be followed by all, and improved our after-school cleaning, adding the extra step of using an electrostatic sprayer to sanitize the classrooms. Additionally, all classrooms are equipped with air purifiers that are turned on at the beginning of the day, and run throughout the school day.

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

Either the School Director or the School Nurse is designated as the lead person to contact the local Department of Health if a case arises with one of the students or staff members. The school then follows the Department of Health guidance for quarantine of the student/staff member, and conducts contact tracing so that all parties are notified appropriately.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

All staff and students complete a daily health check before entering school. This health check will either mark you as green, yellow, or red, depending on your answers. Anyone receiving a yellow or red mark is communicated with before entering the building. A red mark, will keep you out of the building, while a yellow mark will require monitoring. If necessary, we will continue this practice in the new school year.

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

We have shared almost weekly availability to vaccination appointments to our staff and eligible students. We partnered with New Bridge Medical Center and Hackensack Meridian to offer vaccination appointments to our school population. Additionally, we were able to offer appointments to close family members of our staff as well. We offered the incentive of an additional personal day for staff members who chose to get vaccinated. Once vaccines were available to students, we shared appointment information to our families, highlighting the incentives some providers were offering. We have shared information on all three vaccines, and will continue to share information as it becomes available.

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

The expectation is for all of our students to follow our Safe Reopening Plan; however, we do have accommodations in place for students with disabilities. Knowing that keeping a mask on for extended periods of time may be difficult, students will be able to go to the Nurse's Office for a mask break. Students also have full access school counselor or Case Manager if they need to speak to someone.

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)

To address our student needs we are offering a month-long Summer Enrichment program for our students in grades 3-8. Morning sessions will include Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies lessons, as well as a Study Hall so that students can complete their work. Afternoon sessions will include physical activities, STEAM based activities, SEL lessons, and field trips. Our plan for this program is to support our students and ensure their readiness for next school year.

Our SEL plans for students and staff begin with continuing our monthly newsletter highlighting a different SEL topic each month. The newsletters are broken down by grade level bands (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12). In the 2021-2022 school year, we will be adding SEL newsletters for staff. Additionally, we will be introducing our SEL curriculum through monthly Class Meetings. The meetings will be scheduled ahead of time, and the school schedule will reflect a specific meeting time, allowing for the rest of the classes to run on a shortened period. Professional Development days will allot time for SEL activities for our staff members, as we know it is equally important to pay attention to their needs, as those of our students.

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. (1000 character limit)

The Safe Reopening Plan was shared at the June Board Meeting. This Board Meeting consists of Board Members, school personnel, Central Office personnel, and is open to the public. The Safe Reopening Plan was presented to the Board, and feedback and suggestions were considered when finalizing the plan. Additionally, a survey was shared with all staff members and families to receive feedback on reopening in the fall. All 500+ responses to the survey were read, and common trends were noted. Families and staff are split between wanting to have masks in the fall and not wanting to have masks in the fall. Continued heightened cleaning and maintenance was requested by many. Attention to the mental health of students and staff was an important point in many responses. Additionally, attention to academics and an understanding that the transition to full time in-person instruction would take time, was mentioned in many responses. We look forward to conducting this survey quarterly to have consistent feedback from families and staff.

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 placed on our school website, which is openly available. Our website is easily translated by clicking the “translate this page” option, allowing parents, guardians, and stakeholders to translate the plan if necessary. Additionally, school personnel or Central Office personnel will be able to help parents with the translation of the plan, if necessary. For parents who have additional needs, we will provide the plan in the best manner for them to access the information.

