



BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT - SOMERSET COUNTY 35-0240

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 the 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.

BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: JUNE 24, 2021

Dates Revised: (~~12/16/2021~~), (03/02/2022)

1. Maintaining Health and Safety: For each mitigation strategy listed below, the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students 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: Effective March 7, 2022, face masks will be optional, per Governor Murphy's February 7, 2022 announcement that the mask mandate would be lifted. Staff and students will have the option to continue to wear face masks inside. Face masks are not required outside [see note below*]. Parents are to remind their children not to comment on other students' or staff preferences when wearing or not wearing a mask. **Bullying will not be tolerated.** Availability of face coverings will still be located in the nurse's office, if a student or staff member forgets a mask. As of March 7, 2022, mask wearing will also be optional on buses for students.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) Social Distancing, to the best of our ability, or, when there is an overarching requirement from the state.

- Students, staff, desks/tables, and chairs will be spaced appropriately
- Limited sharing of items that are difficult to clean
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles but water fountains are available
- Activity: During increased activity areas [PE/exercise, band, singing, instruments, sports] students will space out or these activities move outdoors
- Sports/Physical Education: masks are not needed outdoors except during days 6-10 after completing a 5-day isolation or quarantine, mask wearing is encouraged
- Cafe: When eating and when masks cannot be worn
- Bus: students will be distanced, to the best of their ability
- Teachers and staff would remain distanced, to the best of our ability

Cohorts

- students will be spaced apart, to the best of our ability during low transmission, moderate transmission or substantial community transmission [CDC Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19]
- students in middle school, in areas of high transmission, will be spaced, to the best of our ability,
- teachers and staff would remain spaced apart to the best of their ability

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette Procedures for Hand Sanitizing/Washing: CDC signage will be hung. Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands.

- Wet hands and apply soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Lather the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails.
- Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds, rinse hands well under clean, running water

- All are encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes using a tissue when no mask is on and after washing hands, blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them
- Information about hand washing and hand sanitizing has been communicated
- To maintain operational, heating and ventilation systems, air conditioning will remain on throughout the building, windows can also be opened as a request from the teacher's association (against the recommendation manufacturing specs for the unit to work properly) and filters for A/C units and HEPA air purification units will continue to be maintained according to manufacturer recommendations

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation The district purchased HEPA air purifiers for each room/area for staff and students. In addition the district is utilizing the highest recommended MERV rating filter already appropriate for our HVAC system. The district purchased electrostatic sprayers for the custodial team to efficiently and effectively clean surfaces including student lockers, surfaces and furniture. A complete disinfecting of the building will take place daily.

High touch areas:

- Restrooms, door handles, latches, push bars and handrails, cabinet handles in classrooms, Light switches
- Student & teachers desks and chairs, computers sign in area, buzzers on main entrance doors
- Elevators, Media Center, Bookshelves, Blue wall mats - gymnasium, bleachers, as used
- Classroom sinks, student cubbies, restroom sinks, and water fountains
- Garbage cans, recycling cans, desks, chairs, floors with tile, and carpets will be vacuumed

Cafeteria:

- Tables, desks, chairs, floors, benches, garbage cans and recycle cans
- Faculty lounges, appliances, machines, counters, tables, sinks, carpets
- Staff will be encouraged to wipe down their area
- Milk cooler, beverage cooler, ice cream cooler, pretzel warmer handle, chip rack, and keypad

Health office: Areas will be wiped down throughout the nurses' office

Playground/Outside on School Grounds: Outdoor high touch areas and playground equipment

Procedures Manual - Cleaning of targeted areas - Classrooms and offices daily:

- 1) Computers, bookshelves, cabinet handles, and light switches in rooms
- 2) Sinks, water fountains will be disinfected
- 3) Classroom cubbies will be disinfected
- 4) Garbage and recycling cans, from each room, will be emptied and bags changed
- 5) Carpets will be vacuumed, and floors washed in classrooms and hallways
- 6) Door handles, windows, and ledges
- 7) Desks and chairs
- 8) White boards & blackboards, unless there is something written on them, (Not Smart Boards)
- 9) Restrooms, elevators, student lockers
- 10) Media center, Faculty lounge areas, copy rooms
- 11) Door handles, latches, push bars, and handrails
- 12) Wall mats - gymnasium
- 13) Bleachers, after use
- 14) Bathrooms - toilets, sinks, mirrors, garbage, floors, walls
- 15) Buzzers on main entrance doors
- 16) Sign in area
- 17) Board and Main Office areas, including bathrooms
- 18) Water fountains, filling station

Ventilation:

- heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) will be maintained and monitored
- individual classroom HEPA filtration systems will be utilized and monitored daily
- exhaust fans will be maintained and monitored
- windows may be opened to bring in outdoor air
- room layouts may be modified to maximize space and/or airflow

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

Bedminster Township School [BTS] will continue to work with the state and local Somerset County Department of Health regarding best practices for contact tracing and quarantining. If there is a situation of a lab-confirmed positive COVID case, the district will follow the guidance regarding home isolation and return to school criteria. The school nurse will continue to communicate positive cases to the local

department of health, if it is required. If there is a close contact of a positive COVID case, the district will follow the guidance regarding home quarantine. We will provide the health department with any and all classroom student lists to report cases and for tracing.

BTS will closely monitor cases in collaboration with the SCDoH when decisions need to be made about transmission, cases, and in-person or virtual instruction. Decisions will be made based on school clusters of cases epidemiologically linked.

Cases:

- Will be investigated, will trace contacts, will encourage isolation and compliance with health officials
- Will encourage eliminating or decreasing staff/teacher meetings, lunch, or other gatherings that lead to adult-to-adult transmission

Positive test results:

- Staff and students should isolate and identify close contacts to quarantine
- School officials will notify families of close contacts
- When students or staff are sick, they are encouraged to stay home from school
- COVID exclusion (isolation) criteria for person who test positive for COVID-19 remain the same:
 - Stay home for at least 5 full days after the onset of symptoms or if asymptomatic after the positive test (day of symptoms is day 0; if asymptomatic, day the test was performed is day 0)
 - If they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days and are fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, they can leave home
- COVID exclusion criteria for close contacts (quarantine) guidance remain the same:
 - Exposed close contacts who have no COVID-19 symptoms and are not up to date with vaccination should be excluded from school and:
 - Should stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after the last close contact with a person who has COVID-19. The date of exposure is considered day 0.
If COVID symptoms develop, get tested and follow isolation recommendations.
If asymptomatic, get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact
 - If the test is positive, follow isolation recommendations.
 - If the test is negative, you can end quarantine after day 5.
 - If testing is not available, you can end quarantine after day 5 (as long as there were no COVID-19 symptoms throughout the 5 day period)

- Exposed close contact who have no COVID-19 symptoms in the following groups do not need to be excluded from school:
 - Up to date with vaccination
 - COVID-19 positive within the last 90 days
- Regardless of vaccination status, after returning from isolation or quarantine, students and staff who return to school during days 6-10 of isolation or quarantine should wear a mask to school, on the bus, and in extracurricular activities.
 - If an individual is unable to wear a mask during days 6-10 following isolation or quarantine, he/she may return to school on day 8 only with a negative test result collected at day 5-7, if they remain asymptomatic, otherwise quarantine at home for the full 10 days.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

It is anticipated that Bedminster Township School will continue with the practice of a screener to assess COVID symptoms and contact with positive cases. If students have symptoms or have been in contact with positive cases, the district will follow the guidance regarding quarantining. If students are sick in school and display symptoms, the school nurse will follow guidance to contact a parent/guardian to stay home from school and consult with private healthcare providers, as needed. As long as parents monitor their child's symptoms and report any symptoms to the school nurse we will continue to use the screener approach.

Screening Testing

- Parents and staff will be responsible for screening
- For confirmed positive cases, close contacts will be identified, those up to date with vaccinations do not need to quarantine
[sports may be canceled in high transmission phases]

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

The school district will continue to inform staff and students of opportunities for vaccination and medical information regarding vaccinations.

[COVID-19 Vaccines for Staff](#)

For more information, please review the following resources:

New Jersey Immunization Requirements: https://nj.gov/health/cd/imm_requirements/

New Jersey Immunization Information System: <https://njiis.nj.gov>

Families who need help paying for vaccines should ask their healthcare provider about the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. The VFC program provides vaccines to uninsured and underinsured children younger than 19 years old. Parents may have to pay administration and office visit fees. For more information, contact the NJ VFC at (609) 826-4862.

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

The Bedminster Township School District will continue to collaborate with our school physician and local department of health in an effort to support students with disabilities. Health and safety are our highest priority. Communication will be shared regularly as the district receives health and safety updates regarding. The district will collaborate with health care professionals and families to the greatest extent to meet individual student needs.

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 Bedminster Board of Education will continue to:

- partner with St. Elizabeth's College to promote training, activities, and resources for staff and students in the areas of SEL/wellbeing. They will continue to partner with Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield for wellbeing services geared towards staff members
- partner with SHMAYSC the BTS Wellness Team, BTS Green/Sustainability Team, and, with Guidance and Administrative initiatives to ensure programs that promote wellness, good health, safe choices, and inclusivity (Wellness Week, Asthma & Allergy Awareness Week, HIB Prevention Programs, Red Ribbon Week, Week of Respect, monthly kindness calendar/alerts, Pass it On Quote & Idea of the Day, Celebrating Students of Character {weekly in ES and monthly in the MS})
- partner with For the Love of Literacy for training, activities, and resources for staff and students in the areas of diversity equity and inclusivity in grades PK-5 and Inclusivity & LGBTQ+ awareness in grades 6-8
- offer intervention and enrichment through Summer Academy for students (as identified by data, narratives, attendance records) to provide support and interventions exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. Summer activities in STEM, SEL, and supportive strategies in core subject areas will be offered in 3 weeks and 6-week sessions

- create a schedule for teachers that allows for time to dialogue (team and department meetings) around current student data on academic and emotional progress and curtailing programs around those data points (ASI, ESL, G&T/Enrichment, Counseling Services, school-wide Climate/Culture activities)
- use the SONDAY intervention program, DRA, F&P, and other early literacy intervention sessions (LLI), are utilized as both pull out and push in for students in need of intervention and support by our two literacy specialists
- School/Family Partnership series in conjunction with our PTO to support resources for mental health, well-being, educational best practices, technology, and other informative topics as parents are key stakeholders and need to be informed and included in the realm of information literacy and engagement.

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.

The Bedminster Board of Education included the Return to School Plan as a public discussion item at the meeting held on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 7:30 pm. It was listed on the agenda that was posted in advance of the meeting. There were no public comments. The administration team did take into consideration comments that were received during the school year. The administration also opened up a comment opportunity for all staff members to share their thoughts through Google Forms in 2021 and again by March 1, 2022.

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 Plan has been converted to Google Docs, the Google Translate function can translate it into 108 languages using the user's browser. The link is accessible on the school district's ADA compliant website, and has a translation feature built-in. The button to translate is at the top of the page and is easy to find.

References: www.cdc.gov <https://www.nj.gov/health/> <https://njiis.nj.gov/core/web/index.html#/home>
<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/health-department>
https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf