



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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 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.

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: BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: JUNE 24, 2021

Date Revised (12/16/2021):

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 wearing of masks will be dictated by any Executive Order issued with the recommendation of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and or The Department of Health (DoH). If they are required, the expectation will be set that staff, students, and visitors wear an appropriate mask/face covering. Students with disabilities that cannot safely wear a mask for reasons due to their disability should not be required to wear one. In those instances, others will maintain physical distance, or adhere to other public health requirements. Face masks will not be required unless there is an overarching requirement from the state; however, for continued sensitivity to the mental health of students and staff members as all continue to navigate these challenging times, face coverings may be worn by staff and students.

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

Social Distancing in Instructional and Non-Instructional Rooms, 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
- Floors will be marked
- Limited sharing of items that are difficult to clean
- Students will use individual student lockers, cubby and or back of seats for backpacks/coats
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles but water fountains will be available, if county approval is received
- Activity: During increased activity areas [PE/exercise, band, singing, instruments,sports] students will space out accordingly or these activities will move outdoors to large, well-ventilated areas
- Cafe: When eating and when masks cannot be worn
- Bus: students will be distanced, to the best of our ability

- Teachers and staff would remain 6 feet apart from one another, at all times

Cohorts

- students in all grades will be spaced 3 feet apart, if required, 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, 6 feet apart
- teachers and staff would remain 6 feet apart from one another, at all times

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette Procedures for Hand Sanitizing/Washing: CDC signage will be hung for proper hand washing [Stop Germs and Wash Hands](#) [Staff poster - hand washing](#) [Staff poster - hand washing Spanish](#) [Handwashing posters for students](#)

Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands before eating, after using the bathroom, before and after physical education, and after using transportation, as needed.

- Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails.
- Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds, rinse hands well under clean, running water
- All 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
- CDC guidance for use of hand sanitizer includes the following steps:
 1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount)
 2. Rub hands together, rub the gel over the surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry, around 20 seconds.
 3. Children aged 5 and under will be monitored when using hand sanitizer
- Information about hand washing and hand sanitizing will continue to be communicated to all
- To maintain operational, heating and ventilation systems, air conditioning will remain on throughout the building, windows can also be opened 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 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 in classrooms
- Blue wall mats - gymnasium, bleachers, as used
- Classroom sinks, student cubbies, restroom sinks and water fountains
- Garbage and recycling cans, from each room, will be emptied and bags changed
- Carpets will be vacuumed, and floors in classrooms and hallways
- All desks and chairs, floors with tile

Cafeteria:

- Tables, desks, chairs, floors and benches will be cleaned
- Faculty lounges, appliances, machines, counters, tables, sinks will be sanitized, carpet will be vacuumed
- Staff will be encouraged to wipe down their area before they eat
- Sanitize milk cooler, beverage cooler, ice cream cooler, pretzel warmer handle, chip rack, and keypad
- Sanitize top of garbage cans and recycle cans
- Empty garbage and recyclables

Health office:

- Isolation area and all other areas including the bathroom(s) designated for the nurse
- The addition of one bathroom will be used for potential quarantine isolation
- 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) Classroom sinks, restroom sinks and 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) All door handles, windows, and ledges
- 7) Student & teachers desks and chairs
- 8) All 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) Blue wall mats - gymnasium
- 13) Bleachers, after use
- 14) All bathrooms - toilets, sinks, mirrors, garbage, floors, walls, and supplies will be refilled
- 15) Buzzers on main entrance doors
- 16) Sign in area
- 17) Board and Main Office areas, including bathrooms
- 18) Water fountains, filling station - as approved by the county

Ventilation:

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

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 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 there is a situation of close contact of a positive COVID case, the district will follow 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, trace contacts, encourage isolation and quarantine
- 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 should quarantine
- School officials or the SCDoH will notify families of close contacts [within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over 24 hrs.]

Quarantine:

- Close contacts, identified through contact tracing, quarantine unless fully vaccinated, or tested positive in the last 3 months, without symptoms [returning back will be determined by the local health department - SCDoH]

Fully Vaccinated

- Youth under age 12 are not yet eligible

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 will be responsible for completing the screening [format to be supplied by BTS]
- Staff will be responsible for completing the screening
- For confirmed positive cases, close contacts will be identified
- Athletes, coaches, activity monitors/teachers, or chaperones may be screened more often for participation in sports during low, moderate, and substantial community transmission [sports may be canceled in high communication transmission phases]

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

The school district will continue our efforts to inform staff and students of opportunities for vaccination efforts and updated medical information regarding vaccinations. This may include local group vaccination sites, drive through vaccination sites, and updated information regarding age requirements for 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 is our highest priority. Communication will be shared regularly as the district receives updates regarding mask wearing, quarantining protocols, etc. 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. (1000 character limit)

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. (1000 character limit)

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. All shared comments were taken into consideration when completing the plan.

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