



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: Cresskill School District

Date: (06/23/2021)

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/11/2023

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:

Masks continue to be optional at this time per the updated NJDOH guidelines. However, they were heavily in use during the recent times of lower air quality when walkers and staff working outdoors were provided with KN95 masks. Teachers review mask wearing procedures with students at regular intervals. All staff assisted in reminding students to properly wear or adjust their masks to fully cover the mouth/nose.

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

Students continue to be distanced at least 3 feet apart in the classroom. No more than 3 students are allowed in the bathroom at a time. Arrival and dismissal has been located outdoors whenever the weather permits. Students are encouraged to eat outside with supervision when the weather makes this possible, including during the winter months. We adjusted our lunchtime protocols to reflect the reduced quarantine guidelines, providing separate eating areas for students who have just returned after testing positive for COVID

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

We replaced soap and paper towels dispensers with hands-free models prior to reopening in Sept 2022. We continue our use of hand sanitizer in each classroom and main areas (gym, cafeteria, main office). We encourage the following handwashing/respiratory protocols: Upon arrival each morning teachers provide hand sanitizer to all students, students are encouraged to have their own individual hand sanitizer at their desk to use at their discretion, students are reminded to wash hands after using the restroom, univent filters are replaced and maintained throughout the year, student masks are encouraged to wear masks in the classroom if they choose to, and air purifying filters were placed in spaces that did not have exterior windows. Recommendations for next year will include a continuation of these procedures.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

During the course of the day, lavatory facilities are continuously sanitized. Classrooms are sanitized by custodial staff following the student's departure including wiping desks and touch surfaces using a hospital grade disinfectant. Water fountains have returned to use with frequent sanitizing; bottle fillers remain open with multiple daily sanitizing. At the high/middle school, we have installed hands-free door foot pulls on all bathroom doors, and multiple hand sanitizer towers throughout the building. Each classroom in the district has a sanitizing station containing disinfectant spray, paper towels and hand sanitizer. In terms of ventilation, we began changing univent filters quarterly. Our system uses Merv 7 or Merv 8 filters. Windows remained open most of the year to allow for additional ventilation and fresh air. The middle/high school main rooftop HVAC unit has just been replaced.

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

We continued to follow the most current guidance related to quarantine and testing. We have continuously modified protocols and quarantine rules in conjunction with the fluid CDC and state guidelines. As we have returned to a normal position of not requiring testing, we continue to follow and abide by our local and state health offices.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

This year, diagnostic and screening tests were no longer needed due to changing regulations. In the upcoming year, we will pivot as necessary should a need arise to reintroduce testing.

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

We will continue to work with local health providers to arrange for necessary vaccinations per DOH recommendations.

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

We continue to work with families who have voiced medical concerns regarding COVID. These accommodations were made in ways to allow for any child's full participation in daily schooling to the maximum extent possible, while at the same time ensuring the safety of other students and staff.

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):

District admin revised their screening procedures to collect and analyze individualized student data and needs. We will be continuing this process in the 23-24 school year, students who need additional support receive support as needed. We continue with community-based wellness committees that generate ideas for supporting students' mental health through in-class activities, guest speakers, and after school events. The district is providing additional counseling for all middle/high school students and has increased our elementary guidance program to include full time counselors in each building. We resumed serving lunches in September 2021. Lunch tables will be sanitized in between each period. At the elementary level, we hired more lunch aids to allow the students to have lunch in their classrooms in PK-1 alleviating crowding in the cafeteria.

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):

Parents have voiced their approval of a return to a more normalized school year. There have been no recent requests or concerns raised regarding COVID. However, the superintendent did release information to the community after concerns were raised around the Canadian fires and impact on air quality. In response, an informational video about air filtration and filtering was created for the community, alleviating concerns.

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)

Cresskill has followed the suggested template provided by the New Jersey Department of Education for this plan. Like most district communication, if a parent requests translation services or an alternate format, the district will give its best effort to provide that service in a reasonable time frame. The Cresskill School District website is formatted so that the entire site can be translated into foreign languages. In addition to written communication shared with families, videos outlining the procedures and policies for schooling during Covid were created and shared with the community prior to student returning to school in September 2020.

The district will continue to provide multiple instructional opportunities that promote hybrid and remote learning. Additional technical educational resources were implemented with training provided by fellow staff and administration.