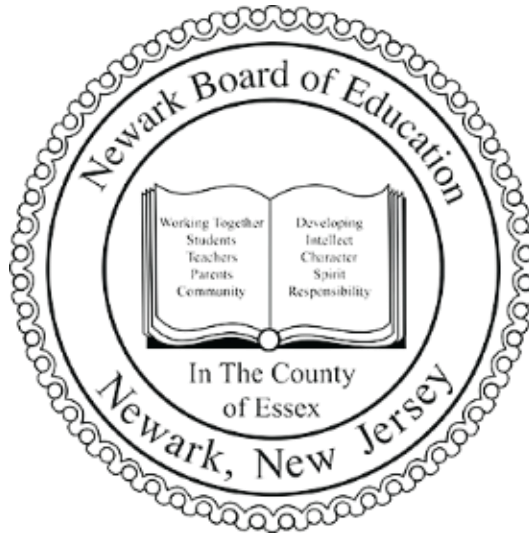


Newark Board of Education

Safe Return to School Plan 2024-2025



Roger León, Superintendent

Where Passion Meets Progress



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Newark Board of Education Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service

Introduction and Background

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.

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.

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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Newark Board of Education

Date 6/14/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/14/2023 ongoing until 9/30/2024

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

All employees, students, and visitors entering school or district buildings may be required to wear a face mask covering the mouth and nose. If required, students and staff must arrive to school and work with a mask. Acceptable masks include disposable surgical masks or cloth masks. Masking requirements will be determined on an ongoing basis in accordance with current CDC Guidance for COVID Prevention in K-12 Schools, as well as with the directives and guidance issued by state, county, and local public health authorities.

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

Physical distancing guidelines will continue to be followed as needed. This may include limiting group sizes, staggering events or group meetings, restricting non-essential visitors, limiting communal spaces, and sneeze guards as necessary. Transitions in the hallways will be guided, monitored, and physical distance maintained. Schools and district buildings will receive authorization for approved vendors to provide on-site services to students and staff. Scheduling will return to using multiple rooms for instruction throughout the day. Seating will be consistent, as possible, from room to room.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The district will implement the following procedures:

Handwashing/sanitizing during ingress and throughout the day.

Use of hand sanitizer throughout the district and in every classroom.

A hand-washing schedule with school-wide reminders for staff and students throughout the day.

Lessons and practice sessions for students on when and how to wash hands.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Every location has schedules for intense cleaning and sanitizing protocol. Custodial staff will provide on-going disinfecting to high contact surfaces using hospital grade disinfectant and electrostatic sprayers. All schools have received electrostatic disinfecting machines and backpack misting machines. All floor finishes are infused with an antiviral solution and this may take the place of the shoe sanitizing station. Air processors are in operation and air filters are changed on a frequent basis.

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

The district will follow CDC and Newark Health Department guidelines as it pertains to quarantine and isolation. Each school has a room or location designated for isolation. In the event of a positive case, employees or students will notify the Office of Health Services.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Diagnostic and screening procedures will be based on vaccination and COVID-19 activity data and followed in accordance with the most up to date CDC/NJDOH/local health department recommendations. School nurses will screen staff and students who present with COVID-compatible symptoms and review isolation and quarantine guidelines.

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

The Newark Board of Education will continue to partner with city, county, and state health departments to make vaccinations available to all district stakeholders. Verification of the COVID-19 vaccination for staff can be uploaded on the district's employee platform and for students on the enrollment system.

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

In collaboration with families, the district will make appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies. This may include alternative methods for wearing masks and using face shields.

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)

Every student is assessed for academic learning and social and emotional well-being. School-based tutoring is offered at all school sites. Additionally, the district's curriculum and curricular resources, including materials and platforms, are available on the district's website. School counselors and social workers have received training to provide individual, small group, and classroom guidance related to the five social emotional core competencies and grief and loss. The District is utilizing current partners to implement a comprehensive employee Wellness program that addresses health needs, and the physical, emotional, and social challenges of our population.

B. Remote Instruction

The ***Guidance for Emergency Remote Instruction*** will provide continuity of instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. The Newark Board of Education will implement the ***Guidance for Emergency Remote Instruction*** during a district closure lasting more than three consecutive days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. The ***Guidance for Emergency Remote Instruction*** can be found [here](#).

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.

In an effort to encourage widespread comments and participative decision making, the Superintendent will continue to host stakeholder meetings. These include, but are not limited to, the Superintendent's Council of Parents, Superintendent's Council of Teachers, and Superintendent's Council of Students. Various groups of stakeholders are provided the opportunity to contribute feedback.

Additionally, parents, district employees, and students are surveyed through the use of surveys, community forums, focus groups, and public comment during Board of Education meetings. The Newark Board of Education will continue to seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan, within the 60-day revision window, as required by the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The Superintendent of schools reviewed the Safe Return Plan with school principals and staff, as well as, the Superintendent's Councils of Students, Parents, Teachers, and Union Presidents.

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 Return Plan was created in collaboration with the NBOE Reopening of Schools Task Force. The Task Force includes district staff, parents and community members. The plan is available and posted on the district's website in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Upon request, it will be made available in an alternate format accessible to parents with disabilities as defined by the ADA.