



## 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

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LEA Name: Lopatcong Township School District

Date (06/17/2021):

Date Revised (TBD):

The Lopatcong Township School District will maintain the health and safety of its students, educators, and other staff throughout the remainder of the public health crisis brought on by the COVID 19 Pandemic. The district will continue to revisit the plan as guidance is continually changing with the goal to provide the optimal learning environment as we return to full time in-person instruction.

The protocols/procedures will follow the guidelines and requirements that are in place by the NJDOE and NJDOH at the time of reopening in September, and are subject to change. At the time of plan development, the following health and safety strategies remain in place:

[https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts\\_K12Schools.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

### 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:

- a. The Lopatcong Township School District is hoping the improved nature of the COVID-19 pandemic will allow for the lifting of the mask requirements for the start of the 2021-22 school year. However, the district will follow the most current recommendations of the NJ Department of Health, the Warren County Department of Health and the NJ Department of Education regarding face coverings. Please refer to <https://nj.gov/education/reopening/updates/docs/RestartUpdateFacecoverings080320.pdf> for the most up to date Guidance.

As of 7/13/2021 The Lopatcong Township School Board of Education will allow the voluntary wearing of masks for all students. Vaccinated Adults also have the option of voluntarily wearing masks. Those adults not vaccinated will be highly encouraged to wear a mask and the wearing of a mask will be recommended for their well-being and for those around them.

The wearing of masks will be mandated on all buses and school transportation.

Should mandated wearing of masks be reinstated by DOE, DOH or CDC the Lopatcong BOE will reinstate policy for the wearing of masks during school hours.

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

- a. The Lopatcong Township School District will provide as much social distancing as possible in classrooms, busses, common areas and outdoor space. We will consult with the Warrant County Department of Health and review guidance from the NJDOH and NJDOE.
- b. The District will adhere to State Guidelines as it pertains to classrooms. Seating arrangements will be aligned to guidelines to ensure proper social distancing. (desks in rows, no small groups, Plexiglas barriers)
- c. Every effort will be made to maintain proper physical distancing at the designated entrances. Both the Elementary School and the Middle School will provide signage to maintain proper social distancing during arrival, hallway passing times, use of common areas, and dismissal times.
- d. School protocols may include but are not limited to: appropriate signage on walls, one way hallways when possible, use of separate entrances for arrival and departure, limited and staggered passing times (when possible) and floor signage to remind student to remain socially distant when traveling between locations.
- e. The District is researching options for more social distancing during lunch periods. Options include: additional staff, staggering lunch schedules, adding seating to cafeteria, exploring other space for serving lunch, including classrooms. Additional planning will occur during the months of July and August

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- a. Staff will have instruction during professional development during the week of August 30, 2021 on handwashing and proper respiratory etiquette and will turnkey to the students on the first day of school. Staff will reinforce handwashing and respiratory expectations as needed throughout the year.
- b. Hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) will be located in
  - i. Every classroom
  - ii. At the entrances and exits of the buildings

iii. Outside the bathrooms

- iv. In the lunchroom
- v. In various locations in the hallways
  - 1. Students will be asked to wash their hands for at least 20 second intervals before and after eating, after using the restroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
- c. Signs promoting proper handwashing are placed in every bathroom and throughout the school buildings to promote proper hygiene.
- D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**
  - a. The District has developed and will maintain the schedule for cleaning and sanitizing the buildings
  - b. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.) Examples of frequently touched areas in schools:
    - 1. Classroom desks and chairs
    - 2. Lunchroom tables and chairs
    - 3. Door handles and push plates
    - 4. Handrails
    - 5. Kitchens and bathrooms Light switches
    - 6. Handles on equipment (e.g. athletic equipment)
    - 7. Buttons on vending machines and elevators
    - 8. Shared telephones
    - 9. Shared desktops
    - 10. Shared computer keyboards and mice
    - 11. Drinking fountains
  - c. Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
  - d. The district will ensure that their indoor facilities have adequate ventilation which includes:
    - i. Recirculated air will have a fresh air component
    - ii. Window will be opened if A/C is not provided
    - iii. Filters for the A/C units will be maintained and changed according to the manufacturer recommendations.
  - e. To limit crowds in the bathroom the district will limit the number of students who can enter the bathrooms to one student at a time. There will be designated bathroom sign-ins with a staff member throughout each building.
  - f. The district has installed no-touch faucets

- g. The district will remove all tops of garbage cans to limit contact
  - h. The district will have all bathroom doors propped open to limit contact
  - i. The drinking fountains will not be in use. The district encourages staff and students to bring in their own bottled water. Water will be available to those that are in need.
  - j. Hand sanitizer will be made available at the entrance to each building and in each classroom, outside public bathrooms and office. There will also be hand sanitizers found throughout the hallways.
  - k. Schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of furniture has been developed for each building
  - l. Disposable wipes will be available to all staff to clean commonly used surfaces such as keyboards, desks, and remote controls before use.
  - m. The district will ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices
  - n. The district is researching and will purchasing Air & Surface Pro ACTIVEPURE units in classrooms and LGI areas.
  - o. If a person is positive for COVID-19, the areas where the affected person was will be closed for 24 hours. The area will be cleaned and sanitized after the 24 hour wait time.
  - p. Windows will be opened to increase air circulation, weather permitting
  - q. Internal classroom doors will be open to increase air circulation
  - r. Where deemed necessary, additional training will be provided to the custodial staff.
- E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health department
- a. The Lopatcong Township School District will continue to follow the contract tracing and quarantine recommendations of the Warren County Department of Health and the CDC.
  - b. Updates and changes to protocols will be communicated the community regularly.
- F. Diagnostic and screening testing
- a. The Lopatcong Township School District will continue to safely and respectfully screen students and employees for symptoms of and history of exposure to COVID-19.
    - i. Parents and Guardians will be required to complete a monthly “COVID-19 Student Self-Screening Consent Form.” This form will serve as an attestation of their responsibility to monitor their children every day prior to their arrival at school for signs of infectious illness including but not limited to COVID-19.
    - ii. LTSD staff members will be required to complete a monthly “COVID-19 Staff Self-Screening Consent Form.” This from will serve as an attestation of their responsibility to monitor themselves every day prior to arrival at school for signs of infectious illness including but not limited to COVID-19.

- iii. Staff is expected to refer any student to the Nurses Office if they observe or are concerned with a student's visible symptoms upon arrival or throughout the course of the day. The Nurse will conduct health review/examination of the referred student and make the best determination for the safety and well-being of all students and staff.
  - iv. A student or staff member who has signs or symptoms related to COVID-19 will be excluded according to the COVID-19 exclusion criteria
  - v. A student or staff member who presents with a positive COVID-19 test will be excluded according to the COVID-19 exclusion criteria
  - vi. Signage will be posted to remind individuals entering the school buildings to remain at home if they are experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms.
- G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible
- a. In collaboration with the Warren County Department of Health, the Lopatcong Township School District has assisted and will continue to assist educators, support staff, and students (if eligible) to schedule and obtain a COVID-19 vaccination. These appointments are made available at various local locations. Release time has been and will continue to be offered to staff and students to assist them in getting their COVID-19 vaccination.
- H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies
- a. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for higher-risk students who have serious underlying medical conditions.
  - b. Confidential medical information must be provided to the school nurse, accompanied by a medical note from a licensed healthcare provider requesting accommodations.
  - c. The school physician will review such request and a determination will be made. If the request is approved, a plan will be developed to accommodate the needs of the student.
  - d. Masks will not be required if a student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individual Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering.

## 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 Lopatcong Township School District plans to return to pre-pandemic full day schedule. The district will follow all mandates put forward by the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health, the CDC and the Warren County Department of Health.
- The Scope and Sequence of the curriculum has been evaluated to revised to better address the interruption of the continuum of learning caused by the pandemic. The new model framework is based on tiered model of instruction to address remediation, grade level and accelerated learning in a trimester model.
- Hiring new middle school math teacher to aid in learning loss during pandemic
- A multi-tiered system of support will include
  - Tiered Classes: Adopting the trimester to focus instructional needs remediation/acceleration
  - Universal Supports: Differentiated instruction within the classroom delivered by the teacher in their classroom
  - Bridge between Supports: Intervention and Referral Services Team will hold meetings as needed based on student referrals/needs
  - Targeted Instructional Groups: Academic Support Instruction targeting specific skills and strategies to support student success
  - G&T/Enrichment: Students will be identified according to the NJDOE implemented G&T guidelines
  - Intensive Interventions: Special Education and/or 504 supports will be put in place for students who demonstrate a need for more individualized support.
  - Extra-School Academic Support: The district will offer tutoring/academic support during the 2021-22 school year, a summer STEAM program (summer 2022), Summer Academic Support (summer 2021, and summer 2022) and After school tutoring program (2021-22)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Students:
  - Continue with the District Wide SEL Program: Leader in ME
    - Launch with “First Ten Days” District wide exploration of the 7 Habits
  - Summer Transition Program
    - A 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition program for students remained virtual for the entire 2020-21 school year
  - Periodic Counseling when needed, provided by school social workers and guidance counselors
  - Consultations may be requested with a behaviorist to develop and implement an intervention plan to support individual students
  - Extended School Year will be in person starting summer 2021
- The LTSD will return to in person food services for students and participate in the Federal School Lunch Program.
- The Lopatcong Township Board of Education will address the plan to have the after school care program reinstated for the 2021-22 school year during the July committee meetings

**The Lopatcong School District will use the Virtual Learning Plan in the Restart Plan approved for the 2020-21 school year if the need for Virtual Learning is necessary based need due to the pandemic .**

<http://www.lopatcongschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Lopatcong-Restart-and-Recovery-District-Plan-8.10.2020-1.pdf>

### 3. Public Comment

- 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 plan was shared on the District website
  - A google Form Survey was created to allow for public comment and input on the Safe Reopening Plan. Additional Surveys will be utilized in the even revisions are necessary.
  - The Plan was reviewed at the June 21, 2021 BOE Meeting.

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 will be posted on our website. The plan will be translated to Spanish and make available in any other format as requested by a parent. All translations will be done using google translate.

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