

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

Warren Hills Regional School District "Safe Return Plan" June 2021

Date (06/10/2021)

Date Revised (08/13/2021)

Date Submitted (08/23/2021)

Date Submitted (10/25/2021)

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

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

- Per Executive Order #251 issued by Governor Murphy on Friday, August 6, 2021, students, faculty & staff and visitors are required to wear masks in school buildings for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The Executive Order is effective August 9, 2021.
- Should indoor mask requirements be lifted, students, faculty and staff members choosing to wear a mask may do so without fear of being teased, bullied, and/or harassed. Behaviors of this nature will be addressed accordingly via Board of Education Policy & Regulation #5600 Student Code of Conduct and/or Policy & Regulation #5512 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.
- Signage will be placed in classrooms, hallways, office areas and common areas promoting prescribed hygiene, hand washing, face covering and social distancing procedures, per required guidelines.

- Infographics will be posted in schools and provided to students, families, faculty and staff members showing appropriate face covering protocols, per guidance.
- Masks must be worn on school busses to and from school and for athletic competitions, per federal guidelines and Executive Order #251
- Bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan, #1648.02 Remote Learning Options for Families and/or #1648.03 Restart and Recovery Plan Full Time Remote Instruction.

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

- The Warren Hills Regional School District (WHRSD) will follow the guidance/recommendation(s) of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Warren County Health Department (WCHD) on social distancing protocols.
- Social distancing markings and directional guides will be placed on the walls and floors.
- One way hallways and stairwells will be clearly marked to ensure social distancing throughout the buildings.
- Social distance will be maintained during the initial student entry in the morning by using a queue setup at multiple entry points. Markings will be placed on the sidewalk to remind students to maintain the prescribed social distance as required from the most up-to-date information by the NJDOH, NJDOE and WCHD.
- Students will be dismissed from the building in small groups as designated by the administration.
- The use of common areas will be limited to times when social distancing can be maintained and when students are supervised such as testing, related services, as required from the most up-to-date information by the NJDOH, NJDOE and WCHD.
- Bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan, #1648.02 Remote Learning Options for Families and/or #1648.03 Restart and Recovery Plan Full Time Remote Instruction.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The Warren Hills Regional School District (WHRSD) will follow the guidance/recommendation(s) of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Warren County Health Department (WCHD) on handwashing protocols.
- Wall mounted, automatic hand sanitizing stations will be placed in each room.
- Disinfectant wipes and additional supplies of hand-sanitizer will be available in every classroom, office area and common area.
- Classroom/office windows can be opened to provide additional fresh air flow to those areas.
- Air purifiers purchased for specific areas of each school building.
- Bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan, #1648.02 Remote Learning Options for Families and/or #1648.03 Restart and Recovery Plan Full Time Remote Instruction.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- The Warren Hills Regional School District (WHRSD) will follow the guidance/recommendation(s) of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Warren County Health Department (WCHD) on cleaning and sanitizing protocols.
- Shared workspaces, labs and other shared equipment will be sanitized/cleaned daily utilizing electro-static spray guns and EPA COVID-19 approved sanitizing solutions.
- Wall mounted, automatic hand sanitizing stations will be placed in each room.

- Disinfectant wipes and additional supplies of hand-sanitizer will be available in every classroom, office area and common area.
- Duct work will be inspected, cleaned and sanitized.
- Classroom/office windows can be opened to provide additional fresh air flow to those areas.
- Air purifiers will be purchased for specific areas of each school building.
- Routine cleaning schedules will be enhanced to ensure the sanitizing and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, objects, items, etc.
- All cleaning/sanitizing products will meet prescribed CDC and EPA guidelines for effectiveness in battling COVID-19.
- Electrostatic cleaning guns will be used to disinfect classrooms, restrooms, busses, hallways, doorknobs, handrails, and offices.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms, offices and specific locations in hallways as prescribed by medical professionals.
- Approved disposable wipes will be placed in each classroom and available to staff for the cleaning of keyboards and other frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- The district will ensure adequate supplies of cleaning materials are available to support enhanced cleaning practices and protocols.
- Water fountains will be shut down. Students will be encouraged to bring their own water.
- Sports equipment will be sanitized as per the guidelines of the NJSIAA for phase one of athletic reopening using a disinfectant sprayer.
- Bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan, #1648.02 Remote Learning Options for Families and/or #1648.03 Restart and Recovery Plan Full Time Remote Instruction.

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

- The Warren Hills Regional School District (WHRSD) will follow the guidance/recommendation(s) of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Warren County Health Department (WCHD) on contact tracing protocols.
- At this time, vaccinated individuals would NOT need to quarantine if considered a close contact of a positive case. The WHRSD will implement changes to this procedure based on the guidance and recommendations of the State of NJ, NJDOH and/or WCHD.
- Quarantine protocols for vaccinated, partially vaccinated and unvaccinated persons can be found [HERE](#)
- Per guidance released by the NJDOE and NJDOH, the following exception to contact tracing protocols is introduced: *Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition **excludes** students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.*
- All school district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school district will be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the contagious disease.
- Warren Hills Regional will collaborate with the local health department and engage their school nurses to develop contact tracing policies and procedures, as well as educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.
- As per the county superintendent's office, Warren County Health Department will conduct contact tracing.

- Bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan, #1648.02 Remote Learning Options for Families and/or #1648.03 Restart and Recovery Plan Full Time Remote Instruction.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Through April and May the district collaborated with a community agency to provide FREE COVID tests to all members of the community. The testing site is available every Thursday from 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM.
- Notice of the testing site has been provided via the school district's mass notification system and social media platforms to all families and community members.
- Nursing staff will continue to follow established protocols from the NJDOH and WCHD until and when such guidance is revised, updated or lifted.
- Per Executive Order #253, screening testing will be provided on-site for all faculty & staff not fully vaccinated beginning Monday, October 18, 2021. Screening Testing will occur two times per week, Monday & Friday and is offered at no cost. Students may choose to be tested with consent from their parent/guardian at no cost during the on-site testing days and times. Student screening testing is completely voluntary.
- Travel: Domestic and International travel will be covered by guidance issued from local, state and federal agencies as well as Policy 1648.11

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

- The district, in collaboration with two (2) local pharmacies, provided faculty and staff with the opportunity to be vaccinated. Based on our efforts, approximately 140 members of the faculty and staff received vaccinations.
- Per the State of NJ, NJDOH and WCHD, individuals 12 years of age and older are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated. At this time, vaccinations are NOT a requirement to attend school.
- Other faculty and staff were vaccinated, prior to or through different agencies, outside of the collaboration between the district and the local pharmacies.
- Communication was sent via the school district's mass notification system and social media platforms to all families regarding the opportunity available to students aged 12-15 for vaccination appointments at a local pharmacy. Location and appointment instructions were provided as part of the communication.

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

- Plexi-glass desk barriers were provided for students, faculty and staff.
- Faculty and staff were fitted with full face plexi-glass shields.
- Students unable to wear masks due to health conditions or other required accommodations were provided specific safety features to ensure a safe learning environment, including but not limited to face shields and individual desk barriers.
- All bulleted items are reflective of Policy & Regulation #1648 Restart & Recovery Plan.

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 Warren Hills Regional School District (WHRSD) will offer summer programs for all students to address learning loss and gaps. The WHRSD will utilize in-person and remote (Edgenuity) learning models to support students. The curriculum will be chunked to promote focused and specific remediation opportunities. WHRSD will provide opportunities for "hands-on" and accelerated "mini" summer sessions for CTE-based courses, AP and Honors courses.

WHRSD will continue to provide the "Seamless Summer Option" free meal program to all students/families. Satellite meal pick up locations and home delivery available for specific instances.

Social Emotional support for students, families, faculty & staff will be provided through collaborative efforts with our on-site School Based Youth Services Program, CST & Guidance counselor & increased in-person, peer to peer and teacher to student interaction. Revised bell schedules provide additional time for academic and SEL support embedded in the school day.

Academic Component of Plan

- Our plan for the 2021-2022 school year is a full return to, in-person, full day, 5 days per week with lunch service.
- For the summer of 2021, the WHRSD will offer restoration and remediation opportunities through in-person and remote learning models using Edgenuity. Established, aligned Curriculum and NJSL Standards will be chunked to essential standards to provide focus on learning loss, learning gaps and remediation for next grade level
- In-person environment for summer programs at MS & HS
- Students will keep their laptops over the summer in order to access learning opportunities while at home
- Summer School programs will run from July 6 - August 5, every Tuesday & Thursday from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Students must attend all 10 instructional meetings in order to receive credit unless prior approval is given otherwise by building administration.
- CTE/Hands-on courses available - these courses are in-person only - Agricultural Sciences, Technology Education
- AP/Honors seminar - 2 Week "mini" session in a seminar format that outlines AP/Honors course expectations, workload, AP Exam preparation - July 29 - August 12 - Tuesday & Thursday from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - No assignments/grades for this offering

Social/Emotional Learning Component of Plan

- Summer activities hosted/facilitated by WHRSD - Student and Family events
- Possible events: Field Trips, Movie Nights, Game Nights, Dances, Carnival
- Support continued co-curricular club activities; keep students engaged over the summer
- Create events/activities that keep students and school connected/engaged - virtual and in-person

- Counseling programs offered by School Based Youth Services, WHRSD CST and Guidance Counselors - HS & MS

Food Service Component of Plan

- WHRSD will continue to provide meals to all students/families, at no charge, as a continuation of our Reopening Plan from the 2020-2021 school year.
- Satellite locations for pick up and home delivery of meals, in specific situations, will continue.
- We are collaborating with our sending district partners to ensure the needs of all students/families in our communities are met.