

**LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service
Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 200I(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 200I(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 200I(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

LEA Name: Garfield School District

Date 06/15/2021

I. 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:

REVISION DATED 7/2/2021

As per the Governor's recent announcement on June 28, 2021, the Garfield District protocol for masking in the schools and offices will be revised to make masking optional for staff, students, and visitors effective immediately on 7/2/2021 until further notice. The District Restart and Recovery Committee will reconvene at the end of the summer to determine the masking protocol for the start of the school year in September 2021.

The District will make immediate changes to this masking protocol as necessary to prioritize the health and safety of our staff and students based on the most current Covid-19 data (and related strains) within the state, county, and Garfield Community as well as the recommendations of the CDC , New Jersey Department of Health, the Garfield Health Department, , and the New Jersey Department of Education.

When masking remains mandatory, the following protocols will be implemented:

Students, staff, and visitors are required to wear face coverings when in school buildings, school busses, and district offices. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for very young children or individuals with disabilities. Exceptions include: extreme heat conditions; The student is in water; a staff member's documented medical condition; a student's medical condition or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP); a child under the age of two years due to the risk of suffocation; during the period that a staff member or student is eating or drinking; during Pre-K nap time; when involved in school activities outside of the building. Mask breaks will be permitted during the day when necessary if social distancing is possible.

* Face coverings may be removed during gym when students are engaged in high intensity aerobic and anaerobic activities and during band and chorus classes if in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of three feet apart. Masks will be required in locker rooms and in the physical trainer's area with all efforts to maintain social distancing. Special PPE will be given to high-risk students and staff as necessary, including N95 masks and face shields.

The District will continue to monitor and keep abreast of all current CDC recommendations, directives from the NJDOE, remain in close collaboration with the local Health Department and make changes to the face covering protocols when possible and deemed to be safe.

Re-Opening Plan sections A.I.a.(1)(d), A.I.b(2) & (3), A.I.c.(1) &(2), A.I.d.(2) and A.I.e.(4) ;(5) ;(6);(7).

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

Social Distancing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible. At the present time, social distance of 3 feet between students and six feet between adults and adults and students is recommended by the CDC. The District will adjust social distance to comply with CDC and DOH recommendations if needed.

Desk guards are installed on staff desks to limit contact.

Signage and floor markings will be displayed throughout the schools to reinforce hygiene rules, social distancing and indicate directional hallways.

Lockers will be utilized in the MS and HS, however time spent at lockers must be kept to a minimum.

School nurses will reinforce importance of handwashing and social distancing.

Students will be kept in classes or cohorts whenever possible to limit exposure.

All schools will have a designated isolation room to be used to house anyone displaying viral symptoms.

Communications and meetings with parents will be held remotely when possible; all visitors must have a previously scheduled appointment.

Every effort will be made to enforce social distancing on the bus. Bus windows will be open for ventilation.

Re-Opening Plan sections A.I.b.(1);(2);(3) & (4), A.I.d.(2) and (3); A.I.e.(2) (a)& (iv), A.I.h.(1)(a)(d), A.I.i.(1)(b) & (3), and A.I.j.(1).

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

Prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% ethyl alcohol) in each classroom, bathroom, main office, cafeterias, school entrances and exits.

Schedules will include designated times for handwashing and sanitizing for each class.

School nurses will reinforce importance of handwashing and social distancing with each class.

The District promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; requiring the use of face coverings; and signs and messages in and around school buildings.

Re-Opening Plan that address handwashing and respiratory etiquette are sections A.I.a. (1)(d), A.I.b.(7) & (8), A.I.h.(1)(e), A.I.i.(1) (d), And A.I.j.(1).

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

All surfaces and high -traffic touch points will be disinfected before, during and after student/staff contact using an EPA Registered Disinfectant Cleaner to kill SARS-CoV-2 microorganisms to provide clean, sanitary and healthy learning spaces.

Cleaning and sanitizing will be done in accordance with the district plan after every session of before and after care.

The custodial/maintenance staff will be required to document cleaning procedure with the district issued checklist that must be displayed in the utilized area after the cleaning and sanitizing is completed.

Disinfecting wipes will be provided in all age-appropriate classrooms to ensure that desks are cleaned when classes are changed. Desks will be wiped down as soon as students enter and will not interfere with the start of class and/or instructional time. Students will dispose of wipes in the designated receptacle with social distancing to the greatest extent possible will always enforced.

Each school will maintain protocols to prevent students congregating in bathrooms and restrooms will be cleaned twice throughout the day. District issued checklists will be utilized to document bathroom cleaning schedule.

Only fire retardant rugs will be used in elementary classrooms and they will be sanitized daily.

District will provide every classroom and office with EnviroKlenz mobile air purification system units, which uses a safe and effective technology to capture and destroy airborne toxic and noxious gasses, particulates, allergens, bacteria, viruses, and other allergy triggers.

Windows and doors will be kept open to the greatest extent possible without threatening the health, safety and welfare of students and staff.

District is currently exploring the possibility of installing window AC units in elementary classrooms and investing in a total replacement of the GHS HVAC system to meet current standards and include AC.Fans without blades will be permitted in classrooms and instructional areas.

Bus drivers must clean and disinfecting seats, railings, door frames, handles, windows, and controls with EPA approved disinfecting cleaners before and after all bus runs.

Re-Opening Plan sections A.I.c. (3), A.I.g, A.I.h.(1)(a) &(c), A.I.i.(1)(e) &(g)(1), A.I.i.(2), and A.I.i.(3)

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

Contact tracing is conducted by the local Health Department in collaboration with the Garfield School District.

Upon notification that a student or staff member has tested positive for Covid 19 , the local health department will be notified by the Nursing Supervisor and identify close contacts , where close contact is being defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Trained Personnel in the district will include the school Nurses, School Safety Officer, and designated members of the Pandemic Response teams.

Quarantine Periods for Exposure to Covid 19: While the CDC released guidance with options to shorten the quarantine time period following exposure to a confirmed case of Covid-19, the CDC and NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days as the preferred quarantine period when county is in the high-risk zone. When the county is in the moderate zone, the district will adhere to the less stringent quarantine requirements as follows:

Staff and students can return to the workplace : after day 10 without a Covid-19 test and no symptoms; after day 7 with a negative Covid -10 provided test was done between days three and five.

If positive, the individual must quarantine a minimum of 10 days and cannot return until: Resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours and a complete resolution of all symptoms. A doctor's note is required to return.

Fully Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine. Persons who were clinically diagnosed with Covid-19 within three months with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine.

TRAVEL QUARANTINE (County is in moderate zone currently on CALI map).

ALL International travelers both Vaccinated and Unvaccinated: Can return to the workplace after day 10 without a Covid-19 test and no symptoms; after day 7 with a negative Covid -10 provided test was done between days three and five. It is also necessary to provide a Negative test result or documentation of recovery required by the CDC to enter United States following air travel.

All travel to Level 3 and Level 4 country, requires minimum 14-day quarantine with return to work based on the recommendation of District Medical Director .

For Domestic Travel:

Fully Vaccinated Travelers - No quarantine or test before or after travel needed for and travelers who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in past 3 months

Unvaccinated Travelers - Defer travel until fully vaccinated. Before travel, get tested for COVID-19 with a viral test 1-3 days before the trip. Get tested 3-5 days after travel. Stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, and return to the workplace/school on day 8 if test is negative.

If not tested after travel, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days and return to work on day 11 with test.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

The school district adopted Board Policy I648 regarding the screening procedures for students and employees.

Students and staff will be screened visually upon entrance to the schools and a temperature will be taken. A temperature above 100.4 degrees will be reason for placement in the designated isolation room.

Verbal questioning upon temperature check, including but not limited to fever, cough, shortness of breath, any close contact with an ill family member and recent out of state or out of country travel will be addressed.

Parents/students and staff are encouraged to review the daily symptom screening questionnaire, found on the home page of the district website, and contact the school with any concerns for possible COVID exposure.

All staff were trained with screening protocols prior to the first date of returning to school.

Re-Opening Plan A.I.d. (1) and A.I.e

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

Most staff and students voluntarily made appointments to be vaccinated. Garfield partnered with Hackensack University Medical Center this year and received an unlimited number of appointments for our staff to be vaccinated at the Meadowlands in March and April, 233 staff members took advantage of this opportunity on March 10, 11 and 17. Staff members were released as needed to meet their scheduled appointment.

The Garfield Health Department distributed Johnson & Johnson vaccines at the Senior Center on 4/12/21 and staff had the opportunity to leave work if necessary.

All flyers from Bergen County for vaccines distributed at New Bridge Medical Center in Paramus have been disseminated to staff immediately upon receipt and district will continue to inform staff regarding the availability of the vaccine. Our district also provided information on vaccine opportunities to both employees and students/families via posted flyers, emails from Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Prestige Health, Golden Healthcare, & HUMC.

The most recent opportunity comes from Greater Bergen for vaccinations at New Bridge and addresses equity by providing free Uber transportation and informing parents that neither insurance or proof of immigration status is required. All information is posted on district and school websites.

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

The school district continues to follow Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the NJDOE Special Education regulations. Mask // face covering accommodations will be made for students with medical conditions. Plans are created with the entire class in mind, while still providing special education students the accommodations as stipulated in the IEPs.

Teachers address SE students with purposeful grouping of students based on academic levels and each student's needs. Students are educated in small groups as well as whole groups based on subject area and IEP accommodations to ensure that the SE students are being provided FAPE. Accommodations are provided for students with medical conditions, IEPs and/or 504 plans as well as any person that the CDC identified as high-risk for Covid-19. Social, emotional, and behavioral supports will continue to be provided.

Re-Opening Plan sections A.I.a.(1)(c), A.I.b.(2)(a), A.I.c.(1)&(2), A.I.e.(1)(d), A.I.e.(5), A.I.e.(6)(d), A.2., and B.I.