



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

LEA Name: Pittsgrove Township School District (PTSD)

Date 7/22/2021

Next Date to be Reviewed/Revised 8/19/2021

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 **New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)**.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks:

PTSD Protocols for Face Coverings: Policy 5141.3

The Pittsgrove Township District will follow the most recent NJDOH recommendations for the wearing of face coverings. As of 6/29/21, face coverings will be optional for all students and staff, with the exception of distinct buses. Masking will be optional on district buses during times of excessive heat as determined by administration.

Philosophy: For the 2021-22 school year, while on school grounds masking will be optional for all students and staff. Additionally, PTSD will follow the elements of NJDOH guidelines regarding our protocols for correct mask-wearing while on district buses.

Wear Your Mask Correctly:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Masks should be washed regularly, inspected for damage, and discarded and replaced when damaged
- Masks should be stored in a clean, dry location, and they should never be shared
- Do not put the face covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Do not touch the face covering part of the mask and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect

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

PTSD Protocols for Physical Distancing:

Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. Students and staff will be kept learning pods to limit exposure and streamline contact tracing.

Philosophy:

The PTSD acknowledges that since people can spread illnesses before they know they are sick it is important to stay three to six feet away from others when possible. Therefore, physical distancing, when possible, is recommended throughout our schools. The PTSD will adhere to the recommendations of **NJDOH** guidelines regarding our protocols for physical distancing.

Classroom/Lab/Non-Instructional/Therapy Room Set-up:

The goal when designing a safe classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room environment will be to maintain social distance. The use of podding is recommended by the NJDOH to help control the spread of any viruses and to manage any possible outbreaks.

The organization of the classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room is important in supporting the academic progress of students. Classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room space should provide an environment that allows teachers and students to interact safely and upholding social distancing. Careful consideration has been given to the strategic placement of furniture, learning centers, and materials to optimize student learning, reduce distractions and keep children safe.

Shared Materials:

The use of a variety of materials is essential for learning. This includes books, writing instruments and materials for special area subjects.

Philosophy:

The goal when designing a safe classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room environment are the concepts of maintaining podding, social distancing and frequent cleaning of shared materials. The use of these practices is recommended by the NJDOH to help control the spread of any viruses and also manage any possible outbreaks.

Process:

- Eliminate, when possible, the use of shared materials
- Set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others
- When materials must be shared, cleaning between use is essential
- Establish procedures to wipe down before and after every use
- Remind children to wash their hands after using a shared item
- If students travel to a room, an area and place should be established for the traveling student to store items away from items being used by others

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**PTSD Protocols for Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette:**

The PTSD 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; **optional** use of face coverings; and signs and messages in and around school buildings. The PTSD has school-wide plans where students are required to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing. If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) should be used.

Philosophy:

All members of our school community should be familiar with COVID-19 information from the **NJDOH**, including COVID-19 Symptoms; How to Protect Yourself and Others; What to Do If You Are Sick; People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the **NJDOH** advises the use of respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette, as well as regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol via the sanitized stations in each classroom and at each building entrance.

Procedures for Respiratory Etiquette/Hand Sanitizing/Washing**More Information:**

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Use tissues and throw them away
- Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer every time you touch your mouth or nose
- Tissues and no-touch receptacles are provided for their disposal
- Provide resources for performing hand hygiene in or near waiting areas
- Washing your hands is easy and one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

It is especially important to wash your hands:

- Before eating or preparing food
- Before touching your face
- After using the restroom
- After leaving a public place
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling your cloth face covering
- After changing a diaper
- After caring for someone sick
- After touching animals or pets

When washing your hands, follow these important steps:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However, sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs. Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

PTSD Protocols for Cleaning and Ventilation Protocols: Policy 3510

The district has developed a plan for increased routine cleaning and disinfection. The district closely monitors ventilation and the air quality from our HVAC units. The district also provides portable air purifiers in all classrooms and common spaces.

Philosophy:

The PTSD will undertake enhanced cleaning of school facilities and offices, with a focus on common areas and high-touch locations. Cleaning schedules have been modified according to student schedules.

Process:

Academic Areas:

- Classrooms will be deep cleaned daily. Additionally, all horizontal surfaces and high contact points such as door handles, chair arms, etc., will be disinfected
- Custodians will utilize disinfecting electrostatic sprayers for daily disinfecting
- All classrooms will have cleaning supplies available for the cleaning of personal spaces. While custodial staff will clean on a regular basis, faculty may clean the areas (for example: desk, chair) at the start of class
- Hand sanitizer will be easily accessible in each classroom, and in common areas
- Portable HEPA filtration units will be added to each classroom

Common Areas:

- Common spaces such as bathrooms, lobbies, and halls will be cleaned daily. Additionally, all horizontal surfaces and high contact points such as door handles, faucets, light switches, etc. in the common areas will be disinfected as well
- High contact points will also be disinfected

Cleaning Information:

Measures to prevent the transmission of influenza and related respiratory viruses:

All custodians and maintenance staff will be using electrostatic sprayers guns for midday and daily disinfecting. This is to ensure all surfaces are disinfected. This electrostatic disinfecting works by providing a charge to a solution so that it electromagnetically sticks to a targeted surface to provide 360-degree surface coverage.

“High touch” hard surface disinfecting, such as doorknobs, pencil sharpeners, desktops, etc., are to be disinfected after the report of a possible sick person, midday and after school during daily cleaning.

Additional Facility Responsibilities:

All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

Maintenance of hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) as follows:

- In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer)
- At entrances and exits of buildings
- Near lunchrooms and toilets

Note:

- Children ages five and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer
- For classrooms with existing handwashing stations, stations will be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol)

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

PTSD Protocols for Contact tracing, Isolation and Quarantining: Policy 5141.3

The PTSD will fully cooperate in sharing information with the Salem County Health Department to fulfill all mandated Contact Tracing/Isolation/Quarantine/Readmittance Requirements.

Philosophy:

When students or staff are experiencing discomfort or potential symptoms of COVID-19, they are isolated from others. The Salem County Health Department will be notified immediately. The Salem County Health Department will spearhead contact tracing assisted by the school nurse.

Contact Tracing Protocol:

Process:

1. School Nurses contact the Salem County Health Department for Contact Tracing
2. Contacts/Cohort information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department
3. Attendance information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department
4. Student, staff, team and bus cohorts will be informed and immediately placed on quarantine based on CDC and Salem County Health Department Recommendations.
 - Contact tracing will be conducted for [close contacts](#) (any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) of **laboratory-confirmed or probable COVID-19 patients**
 - Remote communications for the purposes of case investigation and contact tracing should be prioritized; in-person communication may be considered only after remote options have been exhausted
 - Testing is recommended for all close contacts of **confirmed or probable COVID-19 patients**
 - Those contacts who test positive (symptomatic or asymptomatic) should be [managed as a confirmed COVID-19 case](#).
 - Asymptomatic contacts testing negative should self-quarantine as per DOH guidance (i.e., close encounter with confirmed COVID-19 case)
 - If testing is not available, **symptomatic** close contacts should self-isolate and be [managed as a probable COVID-19 case](#)
 - If testing is not available, **asymptomatic** close contacts should self-quarantine and be monitored, as per **NJDOH** guidance, after their last exposure, with linkage to clinical care for those who develop symptoms
5. Students/staff will be readmitted to school according to NJDOH and Salem County Department of Health guidance.

Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff:

Process:

- An isolation area that is supervised has been established in each school

- Masks are required in the isolation area
- Sanitization is required after each use
- Provide the room monitor disposable gloves

Keep in the room:

- Disposable paper towels
- Tissues
- Waste container with plastic liner
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Hard-surface disinfectant

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

PTSD Protocols for Screening and Testing:

The PTSD adheres to the philosophy that each student monitors their health daily to provide the healthiest environment possible for staff and students.

Philosophy:

Schools will engage parents in monitoring daily the identified possible symptoms of COVID-19 listed within NJDOH guidance frameworks. As we learn about the disease, we may need to alter the list by adding or subtracting symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

Process:

Daily monitoring will take place. Indication that health has been monitored is as follows:

- Staff will sign in and complete a one-time symptom checklist via electronic communication
- Parents will agree at the start of the year to monitor the health of their children daily
- Parents will sign off that their child is has not contracted COVID-19 and will monitor health on a daily basis utilizing the PTSD Screening Expectation checklist

- In the classroom, teacher will make a deliberate effort to monitor health without running through the list of symptoms and then refer children with concerns to the office or nurse for further monitoring
- Schools will also monitor the health of staff and students by tracking students' mandated contact tracing and rates of absenteeism
- Students and staff who are vaccinated for COVID-19 may voluntarily send a photo of their vaccination card to the school nurse. The school nurse puts the immunization information on the student/staff school immunization record. Upon 14 days from the date of the second dose, quarantining is not required upon exposure
- The PTSD will continue to follow all **NJDOH** guidance regarding length of vaccine protection, and quarantine procedures

The PTSD has partnered with Inspira Health Network and the Salem County Department of Health to provide access to COVID-19 testing for our school community.

- Nurses communicated with all aforementioned agencies to verify availability
- PTSD Nurses are instrumental in expediting pediatric testing

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

PTSD Protocols for Vaccination:

Philosophy: The PTSD will enable/facilitate access to the COVID-19 vaccination for those who are eligible.

Process:

The PTSD has partnered with the Inspira Health Network and the Salem County Department of Health to provide access to COVID-19 vaccinations for our school and community.

- Nurses communicated with all aforementioned agencies to verify availability
- PTSD Nurses were instrumental in expediting vaccination appointments for staff
- APSHS hosted a vaccination clinic for interested students and staff in May and June of 2021

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

PTSD Protocols for Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The PTSD will provide all mandated ADA accommodations, and provide educators with professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based and in-person formats. The school district will continue to ensure students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of IEP and 504 Plans.

Philosophy:

The PTSD will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals that the NJDOH identifies as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 for individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions, or medically necessary exemptions from COVID mitigation protocols. The PTSD is committed to ensuring the appropriate delivery of Special Education and Related Services to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.

Process:

- Within the standards of IDEA, the PTSD will ensure our obligation to the delivery of special education and related services
- The PTSD will deliver Extended School Year (ESY) services to students with disabilities
- The PTSD adheres to the Joint statement of Education and Civil Rights concerning equitable education
- Clear communication to parents of the procedures for student referrals and evaluations to determine the eligibility for special education and related services or a 504 Plan as required by Federal and State law will be continuous

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 PTSD will ensure continuity of services for all sub-groups and mitigate learning gaps via curricular acceleration, K-12. The district will plan, design and implement K-12 extended learning opportunities to provide struggling students with small-group instruction delivered by highly effective teachers. The PTSD will build a sustainable, tiered intervention model of school-based mental health supports and services to positively impact students in all sub-groups. Via SEL learning, our model will embed mental health in schools into an equitable system of support to enhance the fit of mental health concerns and to fully promote social-emotional learning while comprehensively addressing any barriers. The PTSD will apply for grants to continue offering access to free breakfasts and lunch for our students.

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)

The PTSD has provided multiple opportunities for public comment on our plan. Our PTSD School Reopening Plan commenced in June 2020, including members of the Board, Administrative Team, Teachers Association and Parents. Input on the plan was sought during the Public Comment Segment at the August 2020 Regular Meeting of the PTSD Board of Education. Each school has a Safety/Pandemic Response Team that includes teachers, counselors, nurses, CST, principal, school safety specialist, custodian, parents.

On June 17th the initial Safe Return Plan was presented to the Board of Education and public comment was accepted. Additionally, a survey of the school community was conducted from 6/28-7/2, 2021. The survey received over 600 responses. The responses and comments will be referenced in the decision making moving forward.

Public Comment Summary:

- Maintaining procedures that are in place to foster and maintain safe and supportive school climates as necessitated by the challenges posted by COVID-19
- Providing necessary communications to the school community and to the district
- Creating additional pathways for community, family, and student voices to continuously inform the PTSD's decision-making as we move through our COVID-19 reopening phases

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 PTSD In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan is comprised of a consistent format, District Policy reference, a philosophy statement for each section, and bulleted lists as quick reference guides.

The PTSD has ensured that the Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services is accessible to all members of our school community. The plan will be posted on the District Website at www.pittsgrove.net. The website has a translation feature, enabling

all members of our school community to access the document in their native language. Because the PTSD is a 1:1 Device district, the devices can be utilized not only to translate the plan, but also for text to speech accommodations.