



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: Salem City School District (SCSD)

Date (05/24/2021):

Date Revised (6/9/2021):

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 CDC.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks:

SCSD Protocols for Face Coverings: Board of Education Policy #2111.6:

Face coverings will be required for students for staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health.

Philosophy:

The SCSD requires that masks be worn in classrooms, academic and administrative buildings, office settings, and when physical distancing is not possible on school grounds. The SCSD will adhere to the most conservative elements of local, state, and federal guidelines regarding our protocols for universal and correct mask-wearing.

Process:

When to Wear a Mask:

- Masks are required for personal interactions, indoors and outdoors
- Masks are always required of faculty and students in all classrooms
- Masks must be worn in common areas, indoors or outdoors. Examples: hallways, stairs, restrooms, library, lobbies, classrooms, physical meetings with multiple people, administrative buildings, etc.
- Masks must be worn outside while in trafficked areas and areas in proximity to others (less than six feet)
- It is only in a private office within a building, when someone is alone, that masks are not required

- The SCSD is providing disposable masks if a member of the school community is in need

Wear Your Mask Correctly:

- Wash your hands 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 and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)**SCSD Protocols for Physical Distancing/Cohorts: Board of Education Policy #2111.63:**

Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. Students and staff will be kept in cohorts, with corresponding records readily available for contact tracing purposes.

Philosophy:

The SCSD acknowledges that since people can spread illnesses before they know they are sick it is important to stay six feet away from others when possible. Therefore, physical distancing, when possible, is required throughout our schools. The SCSD will adhere to the most conservative elements of local, state, and federal guidelines regarding our protocols for physical distancing. The CDC reports that “COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about six feet) for a period of more than 15 minutes.”

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

Foundational premises when designing a safe classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room environment are the concepts of maintaining cohorts and social distancing. The use of cohorts is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies 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.

Process:

- Desks that are used should be marked with signage as appropriate
- Schools will maximize distancing of desks
- Desks should all face in the same direction
- Students/desks utilized will maintain 6 feet distance, from the center of each desk to the center of the next desk when possible
- No soft materials are permitted

More Information:

- Facilities have been measured and configured so that classes and meetings can take place with physical distancing when possible
- Classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room spaces have been reconfigured to maintain physical distancing among students and to establish a “teaching zone” to ensure that the instructor remains distanced as well
- Use of WHS elevator is limited to individuals with mobility needs only
- All tables, desks, and seating in the classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room must be maintained to ensure physical distancing configurations and to avoid having students facing one another
- Students cannot rearrange classroom furniture once it has been moved to meet physical distancing requirements
- Large gatherings outside of classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room settings will be avoided until CDC guidelines specify otherwise. It also is recommended that large gatherings be avoided when off campus
- When it is not possible to control ingress and egress in certain school areas, students and faculty will be directed to maintain social distancing and wear masks when leaving or entering classes
- Visual cues, including signage, colored tape, floor markings, and other indicators, will be placed throughout our school buildings to help people maintain appropriate distancing and to remind them of other key safety measures
- Nurses offices will be split into a respiratory side and a non-respiratory side
- HVAC filter changes will be monitored according to schedule

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:

Foundational premises when designing a safe classroom/lab/non-instructional/therapy room environment are the concepts of maintaining cohorts, social distancing and frequent cleaning of shared materials. The use of these practices is recommended by the CDC and other health agencies 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

SCSD Protocols for Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette: Board of Education Policy #2111.6:

The SCSD 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. The SCSD 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including: (as referenced at: www.CDC.gov) 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 CDC 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. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice
- 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

SCSD Protocols for Cleaning and Ventilation Protocols: Board of Education Policy #2111.6

The district has developed a plan for increased routine cleaning and disinfection. The district has enhanced ventilation via opened HVAC dampers to increase airflow.

Philosophy:

The SCSD 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 cohort 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
- High contact points will also be disinfected midday and again in the late afternoon
- Custodians will utilize disinfecting electrostatic sprayers for midday and 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 and students may clean their personal areas (for example: desk, chair) at the start of class
- Hand sanitizer will be easily accessible in each classroom, and in common areas

Common Areas:

- Common spaces such as bathrooms, lobbies, and halls will be deep 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 midday and again in the late afternoon

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

SCSD Protocols for Contact tracing, Isolation and Quarantining: Board of Education Policy #2111.6 & #2111.65:

Isolation/Quarantining/Contact Tracing:

The SCSD 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.

Contact Tracing Protocol:

Process:

(NOTE: Monitoring/updates to be provided by school physician)

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 or probable 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 CDC 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
- 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

SCSD Protocols for Screening and Testing: Board of Education Policy #2111.65: Diagnostic Screening and Testing:

The SCSD 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 CDC 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:

- Students and Staff will complete a daily symptom checklist via electronic app/email
- Parents will agree at the start of the year to monitor the health of their children daily
- Parents will sign off that their child has not contracted COVID-19 and will monitor health on a daily basis and will complete a daily symptom checklist via electronic app/email
- 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
- 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 SCSD will continue to follow all CDC guidance regarding length of vaccine protection, and quarantine procedures

The SCSD has partnered with Inspira Health Network, Salem Medical Center, 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
- SCSD Nurses were instrumental in expediting pediatric testing at Salem Medical Center, which now operates 4 days per week

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

SCSD Protocols for Vaccination: Board of Education Policy #7112: Safety

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

Process:

The SCSD has partnered with Inspira Health Network, Salem Medical Center 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
- SHS hosted a vaccination clinic for interested students and staff in June 2021

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

SCSD Protocols for Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Board of Education Policy #2111.6, #2111.63, & #2111.65: Special Education/ELLs/Students with Disabilities: The SCSD 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 SCSD will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals that the CDC identifies as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including older adults (aged 65 years and older) and individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions, or medically necessary exemptions from COVID mitigation protocols. The SCSD 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 SCSD will ensure our obligation to the delivery of special education and related services
- The SCSD will deliver Extended School Year (ESY) services to students with disabilities
- The SCSD 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 SCSD 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 SCSD 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 supports to enhance the fit of mental health concerns and to fully promote social-emotional learning while comprehensively addressing any barriers.

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 SCSD has provided multiple opportunities for public comment on our plan via our website. Each school has a Safety/Pandemic Response Team that includes teachers, counselors, nurses, CST, principal, school safety specialist, custodian, parents.

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 SCSD's decision-making as we move through our COVID-19 reopening phases
- Community comment can be emailed to Board Secretary, Mr. Schectman: schectman@salemnj.org

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 SCSD 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 SCSD 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 is posted on the District Website at www.salemnj.org.