



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: **Deerfield Township School District**

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): **06/16/2021**

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): **08/28/2021, 01/19/2022, 06/23/2022, 12/15/2022, 6/22/2023**

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

Face masks for visitors/staff/students will be worn upon entering DTS and at all times, with the following exceptions: When doing so would inhibit the individual's health; a student is in extreme heat outdoors; a student is in water; if a student's documented medical condition/disability as reflected in an IEP, precludes the use of a face covering; if a student is under the age of 2, due to the risk of suffocation; when a student is eating or drinking; if/when anyone has trouble breathing/is unconscious/is incapacitated/is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance; the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities; during gym/music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location & able to maintain a physical distance of 6 ft apart; when wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

6/23/2022

While masking continues to be an important part of the layered prevention strategies central to the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 transmission; circumstances in New Jersey have improved to the point where relaxation of universal masking rules in K-12 schools can generally occur. School administrators should be prepared for the emergence of new variants or substantial waning immunity that could once again lead to greater morbidity, mortality, and disruption, and require returning to additional mitigation measures.

As of March 7, 2022, the state mandate requiring in school universal masking expired, and individual school districts and school boards were able to

make the determination as to whether universal masking is appropriate for their schools. In making this decision, DTS Administration consulted with the LHD and school district medical personnel. Many factors went into this decision, including, but not limited to schools' ability to maintain physical distancing, ability to regularly screen students (including screening testing), vaccination rates of students and staff, ability to perform effective contact tracing of cases, ability to ensure appropriate exclusion of students and staff with COVID-19 or who have been exposed, and ability to maintain adequate ventilation. In addition to school district policies, individuals (including parents/guardians) need to make masking decisions based on their specific situation (e.g., if they or their family members are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19).

Masking is strongly recommended but NOT mandatory.

12/15/2022 - Remains the same as 6/23/2022 update.

6/22/2023 - Remains the same as 12/15/2022 update.

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

Instructional: Maintain 6 ft social distance when possible.(3 ft. when in Yellow). Desks will face the same direction w/ students seated in rows marked with stickers. If a table is to be used for instruction, only one side of the table will be utilized with student spacing. Student population has been decreased daily to maintain social distancing requirements. If needed, use alternate rooms for classrooms that can not maintain social distancing as an option. Non Instructional: Signage will be posted in all hallways/common areas/outside areas. Increased lunch periods have been added to maintain social distancing. Media center, which is a high traffic area, is closed. Extra curricular activities will be virtual. Face masks and social distancing are required in lunch lines, hallways and bathrooms. Two directional hallway traffic with right side traffic only. Bathrooms monitored for social distancing. Signage will be posted outside/inside each bathroom that encourages proper hand washing.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Hand Sanitizing Stations: Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at all building entrances/each classroom/near the lunchroom/all high volume common areas/near the bathrooms. The stations will use an alcohol-based solution of at least 60% alcohol. Stations will be checked and refilled daily by the maintenance staff. Hand Washing Stations: Classrooms, bathrooms and common areas that have hand wash stations will be provided antibacterial soap. Students and staff will have unlimited access to these stations. Hand wash stations will also have available alcohol based hand sanitizer solutions of 60%or greater.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Cafeteria: All tables will be cleaned w/ the appropriate cleaning solutions by Sodexo Staff/ABM custodial staff after each lunch has finished. The cleaning solution will be provided with enough time to properly sanitize the area.

Use grab and go meals/disposable silverware & condiments. Breakfast will be served grab and go as students enter the building. Additional lunch periods have been added to accommodate proper sanitation/social distancing. Students will be spaced at 6 ft. intervals at lunch tables, will face the same direction, and tables will be labeled with an identification sticker that corresponds to the appropriate seat. If students eat lunch in their classrooms, these classrooms will be cleaned after each lunch period. Classrooms will need to be empty while the cleaning takes place. This may be possible by scheduling staggered lunch periods or specials (another class outside of students' primary classroom) to ensure the sanitation takes place.

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

Criteria of an Individual to begin Contact Tracing: Contact tracing will commence upon notification from the County Health Department that a student or staff member has tested positive Criteria: contact of 6 feet (3 feet in a classroom) or < for more than 15 minutes in a 24 hours period. Assigned liaison will communicate and provide requested data as per their request to the Health Department.

The DTS COVID-19 Liaison will continue to Contact Trace in consultation with the LHD, current guidelines and consultation with the School Physician.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Any suspected cases will be reported to the school nursing services immediately. School nurses will notify the Contact Tracing Liaison. Contact Tracing Liaison will contact the Local Board of health and will follow their recommendations moving forward.

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

DTS will participate and partner with Inspira Health Network to provide open opportunities for staff, students and community members to receive information and vaccine appointments on site or at Inspira. Please see vaccination clinic notes of March 17.

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

Mentioned throughout

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)

Hybrid Plan Graphics and Specifics

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10-hguH7N2Ui_gNkSP7k-10Y0ujZQhwAP/view?usp=sharing

Virtual Students in a Hybrid Plan

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10-hguH7N2Ui_gNkSP7k-10Y0ujZQhwAP/view?usp=sharing

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 Deerfield Township Board of Education, at its June 16, 2021 Special Board of Education Meeting, presented the Plan for Safe Return and provided an opportunity for public comment on the plan. With any and all revisions, the plan will be presented to the Board and to the Public within the required time frames and an opportunity for public comment will be provided.

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 Deerfield Township Board of Education will provide this plan via our website, in both English and Spanish. It will also be available in paper copy within the Main Office. Upon request it can be orally translated for a parent or community member by contacting the Main Office at 856-451-6610 ext. 101. All other requests for accommodations will be honored by contacting Dr. Dina Rossi at 856-451-6610 ext. 101.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (1000 maximum characters used)

Electronic platforms have been purchased to ensure our teachers have the tools to be successful in a socially distanced environment. Google Suite, Edpuzzle, and Screencastify are a few examples of premium packages we have purchased for our teachers. We will continue to host monthly faculty meetings to reinforce the implementation of procedures and routines. Each faculty meeting will include a best practices “share-out” that is teacher led. Finally, the assistant principals will push out a weekly newsletter, entitled “Friday Fusion” to keep staff informed of workshop opportunities and other school wide initiatives.

Website: www.deerfield.k12.nj.us