



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FARMINGDALE 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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: **Farmingdale**

Date 05/25/21, Date Revised (03/21/2022):

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.

The district has adopted policies for the restart and recovery after an emergency closure to address topics such as screening for symptoms, mask-wearing, visitors, cleaning practices, contact tracing, scheduling, staffing, continuity of learning, and remote learning. Highlights are presented below.

A. Optional and correct wearing of masks

- The district will maintain adequate amounts of PPE (i.e. facial coverings, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Staff will be provided a facial covering through the district; Staff are permitted to utilize their own personal facial coverings as long as their personal coverings meet minimum requirements.
- The school will follow the directives put forth by the Governor of New Jersey with respect to the wearing of facial coverings.
- When masks or facial coverings are mandated by the Governor of New Jersey, the following will apply:
 - School staff will be required to wear facial coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health (medical documentation will be required).
 - Permitted visitors will be required to wear facial coverings at all times; if a permitted visitor is unable to wear a facial covering due to a medical condition, he/she will not be permitted to enter a school or district facility.
 - Students will be required to wear facial coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of facial coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.

- If the wearing of masks or facial coverings is mandated by the Governor of New Jersey, the following exceptions will apply:
 - When doing so would inhibit the individual's health
 - When a student is in extreme heat outdoors
 - When a student is in water
 - If a student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering
 - If a student is under the age of two (2), due to the risk of suffocation
 - When a student is eating or drinking
 - If or when anyone has trouble breathing or is unconscious, is incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g., face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time)
 - The student is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities
 - During gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task (for example, students operating machinery in which face coverings may get caught)

- Notes:
 - No visitors on campus will be permitted into the building unless approved by administration.
 - While masks are mandated, if a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for any reason, entry to the school/district facilities will be denied.

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

- All students and staff will be socially distanced in classrooms when possible
- This will be achieved by ensuring students are seated three feet apart / staff will be expected to remain six feet apart
- If the district is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be considered including using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart
- Social distancing will occur in common areas; however, use of common areas will be limited by having students remain in classrooms whenever possible
- Enforcement will be the responsibility of the teachers, staff, and administration
- Bathrooms will be monitored regularly by staff to reduce the number of students in the bathrooms at the same time

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
 - Promote frequent handwashing
 - Before and after lunch, recess, gym, bathroom trips
 - Teachers will assist/remind students to wash when possible and when not possible, will have designated times to rotate through common wash stations with students.
 - Paper towels, not hand dryers, will be provided at every wash station in the district.
 - Hands-free sanitizer will be placed at all entrances, outside each classroom, common areas, and learning spaces throughout the building. In addition, each classroom will be provided its own hand sanitizer for use within that space.
 - Encourage students and staff to use a tissue to cover each cough/sneeze
 - Expectations for coughing and sneezing will be presented in SafeSchools training, as well as during the opening days of school for students and staff.
 - Throw away tissue after each use
 - Wash or use hand sanitizer each time for at least 20 seconds
 - Before testing/start of therapy sessions, students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer, whichever the tester or therapist deems appropriate.
 - Prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers in classrooms, entrances/exits, lunchrooms, bathrooms (at least 60% alcohol).
 - Students and staff will sanitize hands when entering the building and after movement between classrooms and non-instructional rooms.
 - Educational Assistants and teachers will ensure students wash and/or sanitize their hands when returning to the classroom or in a designated area if the classroom does not have a bathroom.
 - Students will have designated times in their schedule for hand-washing/hand sanitizing:
 - Before/after snack
 - After using the bathroom
 - When returning in from outdoor breaks
 - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing noses

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- The custodial staff will clean objects/surfaces frequently touched on a frequent, daily basis (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- Increased routine cleaning and disinfection will be implemented.
- The custodial staff will use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Staff will follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (i.e. concentration, application method, contact time, etc.)

- [A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 will be used as a reference when cleaning.](#)
- In addition to normal nightly cleaning, all areas will be fogged or sprayed down with an electrostatic sprayer.
- Daily cleaning checklists will be used for all areas of the building.
- Water fountains will remain open with routine cleaning in place.
- All high touch points will be disinfected prior to the start of the day, and once again mid day to the maximum extent possible.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned daily and between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Schools might need to implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, the CDC recommends the following procedures:
 - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible;
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area;
 - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (i.e. offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- Schools and districts must ensure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate;
- Recirculated air will have a fresh air component;
- Windows will be open if air conditioning is not provided;
- Air conditioning filters will be changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

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

General Protocols

- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- The district will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.

Students

- If a student is exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms, the school nurse will isolate the student and notify parent/guardian or emergency contact to pick up the student at school.
- In the event of an overflow of students, the nurse will direct students to the appropriate isolation space;
- Areas for isolation
 - Reconfigured area across from nurse's room/middle school wing

- A communication chain will be developed in order to ensure the proper notifications are received and those in need of the knowledge receive pertinent details;
- If a staff member identifies a student demonstrating symptoms, he/she will discreetly send the student to the nurse's office and call the nurse from his/her classroom indicating the name of the student being sent down along with the identified symptom(s);
- If the school nurse confirms that a student is displaying symptoms related to COVID-19, the student will be safely maintained in isolation until a parent/guardian or emergency contact is able to pick him/her up from school;
- Students will be permitted to return to school as per CDC guidelines and the Monmouth County Department of Health guidance.

Staff

- Staff with COVID-19 like symptoms will be required to go home and will be permitted to return to school as per CDC guidelines and the Monmouth County Department of Health guidance. Applicable use of sick leave will be utilized.

Confirmed Case

- If the school or district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in the district tests positive for COVID-19, the Superintendent will be notified, who then will immediately notify local health officials and the Executive County Office of Education. Additionally, the Superintendent's designee will ensure that staff and families of a confirmed case are notified while maintaining confidentiality.
- In the event of a reported confirmed case of COVID-19 of a student, staff, or any other individual who spent time in a district facility, the Superintendent will make a decision relative to exclusion and readmittance to school/work, quarantine status, etc. on a case-by- case basis with consultation from local health officials and the county office of education.

Documentation

- Documented log of possible COVID-19 Sign and Symptoms will be recorded in OnCourse under the student's health tab
- If a student is sent home for possible COVID-19 symptoms, the district will initiate contact tracing of who the student has been around and will work in collaboration with the Monmouth County Department of Health.
- Readmittance to school does not require a negative test. The district will follow CDC guidelines, which provide that persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - At least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and
 - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
 - Other symptoms have improved.
 - See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

- Persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 who never develop COVID-19 symptoms may discontinue isolation and other precautions on the 6th day after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA, but must wear a mask in school until the end of the 10th day.
- Upon notification that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will call the school district to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus, where close contact is defined as being within six feet for a period of at least ten minutes.
- The school district will assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual/student/staff member and/or their contacts.
- The school district will ensure that adequate information and training are provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.
- The school nurse, counselor, and superintendent are the designated staff liaisons responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components of the Board's contact tracing policy/protocols.
- The District will collaborate with the local health department and engage our school nurse to educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.
- All contact tracing will be conducted by the Monmouth County Health Department in collaboration with our school nurse and district administration.
- The school nurse, counselor, and superintendent will participate in the [*COVID-19 Contact Tracing: A Course from Johns Hopkins*](#) and turn-key relative information to necessary staff.
- School officials should engage the expertise of their school nurse on the importance of contact tracing.
- Staff will access training through the SafeSchools and participate in annual trainings. In addition, specific training related to COVID-19 will be assigned including, but not limited to:
 - Common illness prevention course
 - Coronavirus Awareness course
 - PPE course
- The district will adhere to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA).
- A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee and shall be responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

General Protocols:

- Health screenings will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations;
- Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed;

- All outside evaluators, therapists, and permitted visitors may be required to submit health questionnaires prior to entering a school or district building

Student screenings:

- Health screenings will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations;
- Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed;
- The screening protocol will take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students;
- Parents/guardians will be required to complete a symptom-free COVID-19 parent/guardian agreement before the start of the school year. In addition, each parent/guardian may be asked to complete a daily health screening questionnaire for each child relative to symptoms and exposure to persons with COVID-19;
- Staff will visually check students throughout the course of the day for symptoms related to COVID-19 and refer any students suspected of symptoms to the School Nurse for evaluation;
- The district has added professional development and SafeSchool trainings on hygiene protocols, as well as COVID-19.

Staff screening:

- Health screenings will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations;
- Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed;
- The screening protocol will take into account staff with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those staff;
- Staff will be required to complete a symptom-free COVID-19 agreement before the start of the school year. In addition, each staff member may be asked to complete a daily health screening questionnaire relative to symptoms and exposure to persons with COVID-19.

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

- Coordinated efforts with neighboring school districts and a local hospital to prioritize vaccinations for eligible staff
- Scheduled appointments around the school day or provided a substitute to allow staff to get the vaccine in a timely manner
- 78% of our staff are fully vaccinated to date
- Eligible student vaccination clinic information continuously updated and provided to parents via website and social media
- Nurse provided information and answered questions for staff and parents regarding the vaccines

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

Account for Students with disabilities

- Guidelines for individual accommodations for students with disabilities will be in accordance with the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- When mandated by the Governor of New Jersey, students will be required to wear facial coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of facial coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.
- The school's 504 Committee will develop a plan to address the return to school of medically-fragile students and those with physical or health impairments who may require accommodations and modifications as part of a 504 Plan.
- The district will communicate frequently with the families of students with significant medical risk factors to determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary prior to a student's return to school.

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 district will continue to coordinate referrals to government agencies such as the NJ Department of Children and Families and the Department of Human Services as appropriate.

- The district will continue to communicate with local community health care providers and direct families seeking healthcare to programs such as NJ Family Care, NJSNAP, NJHelps, Federally Qualifying Health Clinics, and dental clinics.
- The school counselor, CST, teachers, and administrators will monitor students' mental health according to a locally-developed mental health needs assessment tool.
- IEP teams will review student progress to identify possible learning loss and the need for additional services.
- 504 Committee will develop a plan to address the return to school of medically-fragile students and those with physical impairments who may require accommodations/modifications.
- CST Coordinator and CST members will work together to complete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services.

3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments 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 district sent out a survey to all families and community members to gather comments on plan development. The district also took public comment at the June 16, 2021 and March 21, 2022 Board of Education Meetings.

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 plan was presented in a user-friendly format on the district website for review. A district representative is also available to provide an oral translation to parents upon request.