



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 30, 2022.** 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. 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.

As shared at our community forums, we are obligated to follow state and federal mandates as they relate to public schools. Such mandates are enforceable by law and apply to every official, employee, or agent in this state as well as each member of all governing bodies.

The District is seeking feedback from our parents, guardians, students, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders for our six month review. Our latest plan is posted on the district website (<https://oceancityschools.org/safereturntoschool>). The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2022-2023 school year as it becomes available.

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

LEA Name: Ocean City School District

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/30/2022

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 11/14/2023

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: The Ocean City School District will adhere to current and relevant CDC guidance regarding universal and correct mask-wearing as well as relevant and current Executive Orders issued by the State of New Jersey. Students that attend Ocean City School District will be required to wear masks in compliance with the New Jersey Department of Education, the CDC, and/or the New Jersey Department of Health. In addition to signage around the building, email and social media updates will be distributed to students, parents, and guardians regarding the universal and correct wearing of masks as applicable. All staff and students will also be trained on proper mask-wearing protocols utilizing the GCN training module and teacher resources, should there be a requirement to universally mask in the future. As of June 30, 2022, mask-wearing is optional in the district.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): The Ocean City School District will adhere to current and relevant CDC guidance regarding physical distancing as well as relevant and current Executive Orders issued by the State of New Jersey. Students that attend Ocean City School District will be expected to physically distance themselves throughout the facility during the school day in compliance with the New Jersey Department of Education, CDC, and/or New Jersey Department of Health. Email and social media updates will be distributed to students, parents, and guardians regarding physical distancing expectations if necessary in the future.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: The Ocean City School District will adhere to current and relevant CDC guidance regarding handwashing and respiratory etiquette as well as relevant and current Executive Orders issued by the State of New Jersey. Students that attend Ocean City School District

will be expected to utilize the hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes that are in all classrooms and common areas throughout the facility during the school day. The Ocean City School District Policies and Procedures, and the District Return to School Plan reflect the District's handwashing and respiratory etiquette expectations. In addition, signage regarding hand washing and respiratory etiquette is displayed throughout our schools and on school grounds, as proper handwashing etiquette is important for community health. Email and social media reminders will be distributed to students, parents, and guardians regarding the District's handwashing and respiratory etiquette expectations as applicable. All staff and students will also be trained on handwashing and respiratory etiquette utilizing the GCN training module and teacher resources.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: The Ocean City School District will continue to sanitize, disinfect and clean all facilities daily. Furthermore, disinfecting wipes are available in each classroom for students to disinfect their desks and instructional area before and after use. The District has budgeted to update the HVAC control systems in all three buildings. In addition, the District performs regularly scheduled preventative maintenance on all HVAC systems throughout the school year to ensure compliance with ventilation standards including the required "fresh air" component that is specified in Federal and State health guidance. The District will continue to ensure that frequently touched surfaces and restrooms are routinely disinfected and cleaned. The Ocean City School District Policies and Procedures, and the District Return to School Plan reflect the District's cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation expectations and procedures.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: Students suspected of having COVID-19 will be directed to be tested for COVID-19 and self-quarantine based on current and relevant CDC and/or New Jersey Department of Health guidance. The District will continue to work in partnership and communicate with the Cape May County Department of Health regarding the necessity of self-quarantine periods for identified students, faculty, and staff. The Ocean City School District Policies and Procedures, and the District Return to School Plan outline the District's contact tracing and isolation procedures.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: The Ocean City School District will continue to emphasize the importance of self-screening for any community health-related illness. Students, faculty, and staff who manifest or present symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses will be directed and expected to follow the most current and relevant guidance regarding self-quarantine provided by the CDC and/or the New Jersey Department of Health. In addition, regular reminders and social media posts will be shared with stakeholders to reinforce the District's self-screening expectations as applicable. The Ocean City School District is no longer required to test unvaccinated faculty and staff for COVID-19 once per week in accordance with Executive Order 253.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: Vaccinations were made available to educators and staff working in educational settings. The Ocean City School District has continued and will continue to promote opportunities in an effort to keep staff and students up to date. The District will continue to email and post to social media in regard to vaccination updates.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies: The Ocean City School District will continue to accommodate students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies. These accommodations will be in consultation with the IEP team, the student's healthcare provider, the school nurses, and the District's physician of record. Accommodations will also be made for students that have a 504 plan.

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 Ocean City School District will continue to utilize assessment data to determine the educational needs of students and the interventions necessary to accelerate learning. The District will provide remediation and enrichment activities, including summer school for current students, high intensity tutoring and homework help, social and emotional learning opportunities, SAT Prep, and Career and College Readiness summer programs. All schools will offer orientations for new students, current students and students transitioning to a new building. In addition, the Wellness Team will continue to counsel and work with students to maintain continuity of services. The district will continue its practice of using multiple measures to continuously monitor student achievement and to improve our schools. The district has also implemented a 1:1 technology program with all students having access to a district issued Chromebook. The district also offers a full contingency of counseling, wellness, and mental health staff to counsel and assist students with their mental health and well-being. More information is available on our district website: <https://oceancityschools.org/>.

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 Ocean City School District sought public comment on this plan by sending the plan to all stakeholders through the District's messaging system and also received input through our Health and Wellness Committee. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback through a Google Form. The plan is also posted on the district website. The Board of Education also provides regular updates and receives public feedback during Board of Education meetings. The same process is utilized for revisions and updates to the plan.

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)

Stakeholders that have a disability that prevents them from accessing the Plan to provide feedback, will be given the opportunity for a phone conference or in-person meeting to discuss the plan and answer any questions. Our website has a feature to translate content into Spanish. If necessary and upon request, the district will work with a translation service to provide this documentation in any language necessary to accommodate the district's population and language preferences.