



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: Foundation Academy Charter School

Date (06/24/2021):

Date Revised (05/25/2022):

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.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

While required by state and/or CDC guidelines, all school staff, students and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age. Foundation Academies is requiring face coverings for the duration of the 2021-22 school year.

- Parents and students should refer to the CDC guidance [linked here](#) when selecting a mask for school.
- Gaiters and balaclavas may not be worn. Face shields may be worn in addition to, but not instead of a mask.

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

While required by state and/or CDC guidelines, staff and students maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible. K-8 Students remain in one cohort/pods for the majority of their day, as appropriate according to grade and educational requirements, with lunch in cafeterias with assigned and socially distanced seating. When students need to transition to another area, such as to physical education, recess, or small group/sheltered instruction, they do so in accordance with the social distancing requirements in effect at the time. High school students are socially distanced to the greatest extent possible. To accommodate social distancing during lunch periods, ninth and tenth grade students eat lunch in the cafeteria and older students eat lunch in the "Information Commons" – a large flexible use area.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be reinforced with all staff and students in accordance with the CDC guidance [linked here](#). This guidance includes, but is not limited to:

- Washing/sanitizing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - before and after meals
 - after blowing nose
 - after using the toilet
- Covering coughs and sneezes, and washing/sanitizing hands after

Hand sanitizer is available at all entrances and throughout the buildings for student use upon entry to the school and when changing classes.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Foundation Academies has invested heavily in improving ventilation and ensuring clean and healthy facilities. Air scrubbers have been installed in every classroom and office and the HVAC units at our K-8 campus were replaced prior to returning students to the building. (HVAC units at the high school were replaced prior to the 2019-20 school year.) Hard surfaces are disinfected daily, and additional custodial staff have been hired to clean bathrooms and high touch areas multiple times daily, and teachers will sanitize the spaces they used prior to exiting the classroom. Non-touch hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the school buildings, and hand sanitizer is available in classrooms and offices.

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

School nurses have developed contact tracing procedures in accordance with board policy **5141.2 - Illness**, and educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

The school nurse reports all students, staff and visitors to our facilities who are known to test positive for COVID-19 to the local health department. The local health department conducts the contact tracing. Individuals are required to isolate or quarantine in accordance with the State and local guidelines in effect at the time of a positive test result.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Foundation Academies is partnering with a local health agency to offer regular, optional COVID-19 testing to interested staff and students at no cost. Unvaccinated staff are required to test at least once per week in accordance with the New Jersey requirement.

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

Foundation Academies coordinated with a local health care agency to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to staff prior to returning students to the buildings. We have offered multiple Covid-19 vaccine/booster clinics to eligible students, staff, family members and the greater community through a partnering organization.

Unvaccinated staff members are required to undergo regular testing for COVID-19. Vaccinated staff members are required to undergo regular testing when community transmission rates are very high.

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

Students with disabilities are provided with appropriate accommodations with respect to the health and safety policies in accordance with their individual plans.

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)

Foundation Academies recognizes the potential trauma that students have faced during the pandemic. We are focused on building resilience and have trained all staff on trauma-informed practices. For the 2022-23 school year and moving forward, we have hired a Student Success Team of counselors and social workers who will provide additional support to our general education students.

For the current school year, we support students' academic needs through after school tutoring programs.

We contract with Maschio's Food Services, Inc. and will continue to participate in the NSLP Seamless Summer Option for the 21-22 school year.

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)

Foundation Academy conducted several interactive parent information sessions and surveyed families prior to returning students to our buildings. Our families' suggestions and the concerns they expressed were incorporated into our final operating logistics. Our reopening plan is posted on the school website and public comment on the plan is encouraged during all school board 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).

Foundation Academies' Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i) may be found in both English and Spanish versions on our website, at foundationacademies.org/parent-resources/. The document will be translated into other languages upon request, using Google Translate. Oral translation will be provided as needed.

On request to the school, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, can obtain Foundation Academies' Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i) in an format that is accessible to them. Foundation Academies will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format ("RTF") or text format ("txt"), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, large print, or other format.