



BOONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SAFE RETURN PLAN

UPDATED JUNE 2024



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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.

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

LEA Name: Boonton Public Schools

Date: 06/14/2021

Date Revised: 6/10/2024

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

Boonton Public Schools does not require the use of masks. This is in accordance with the latest guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As guidance changes, Boonton Public Schools reserves the right to make adjustments accordingly and will communicate changes to school district families.

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

Effective for the 2022/2023 school year and continuing this year, we are no longer requiring physical distancing in learning spaces, hallways, or common gathering areas within the schools. Should health concerns increase considerably or should updated guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health or Centers of Disease Control and Prevention be provided, the district may consider implementing measures to physically distance.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Frequent and proper handwashing were emphasized throughout the pandemic and continue to be emphasized. Classroom and bathroom soap dispensers are maintained in working order along with classroom and bathroom faucets. Hand sanitizer is available as well. The recommended frequency and duration of handwashing continues to be communicated. Respiratory etiquette is also emphasized and we welcome the wearing of masks as individuals are compelled to do so.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Custodial and maintenance staff adhere to cleaning and sanitation protocol and follow checklists on a daily basis to ensure that our facilities are maintained in a sanitary and tidy manner. Cleaning products meet EPA approval. A facilities assessment of all district buildings was completed in the fall of 2022. Included in the assessment were areas that we may enhance air quality within our building and we remain diligent in monitoring HVAC systems and airflow to ensure healthy learning and working environments.

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

Beginning the 2022-2023 school year and continuing this year, Boonton Public Schools no longer completes COVID-19 contact tracing. Should there be a change in required practices or guidance, the school district may adjust this practice if needed. Any changes to practice would be communicated with district families.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The district has communicated symptoms of COVID-19 and encourages staff and students to remain home if ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Our school nurses are diligent in monitoring students for symptoms, communicating health concerns with families, and advising of required isolation periods.

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

Vaccination information was shared with district families as vaccinations became available for particular age bands. Should large scale vaccinations be necessary again (including boosters and evolving vaccines), Boonton Public Schools will continue to be accommodating of staff needs to attain vaccinations as desired, will share information with the community, and will coordinate with Atlantic Health System as AHS has been a valued partner in this regard.

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

Boonton Public Schools will work in accordance with students' IEPs and 504s to ensure that necessary accommodations and modifications are afforded to students. Child Study Team members, school nurses, school counselors, instructional staff, and administration will work in partnership with students' families in the development of IEPs, 504s, and other necessary action plans to ensure that all students progress toward their IEP goals and objectives and are able to learn and grow in an environment that is safe and most conducive to learning. The provision of compensatory services has been discussed and documented for all students with IEPs as required by law.

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)

Boonton Public Schools will address students' academic needs through a data-based approach that allows staff to identify areas necessary to accelerate learning, in line with the Restart and Recovery Plan submitted in the Fall of 2020. Professional development will be offered in order to continue building fluency in differentiated instruction in order to optimize individual growth. Additional work will be completed to identify and prioritize critical learning standards, and our staff will incorporate tiered intervention strategies to best meet the needs of learners. Through these approaches, Boonton Public Schools will ensure the continuity of academic services to students and continued fostering of student growth and achievement.

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)

This updated plan is made available to the public on our district website and will be provided at a public Board of Education meeting agenda. We continuously seek and welcome feedback on district operations and how we may best address health and safety needs of our students, staff, and school community. Feedback is invited at public sessions of Board of Education meetings and through direct correspondence with the Superintendent.

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)

This Safe Return to Schools Plan is published on the school district website in an easily translatable format. Any family in need of additional assistance to access and understand the contents of this plan is encouraged to contact the superintendent of schools. Accommodations will gladly be made as needed.

4. Professional Learning

Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools.

Annual training of staff will occur regarding recommended health practices. As health related information is provided by our local health official, we will make that information available to families and community members. As further professional development is needed based upon evolving health conditions, we will incorporate as needed.