



**LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service
Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)
LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services**

LEA Name: Elizabeth Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 6/24/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

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 district’s plan for mask wearing follows the guidance issued by the Governor’s Executive Orders and the NJ Department of Health.
- The district currently institutes the following protocols regarding masks:
 - All adults are required upon entering schools for in-person pick-up or drop-off to wear a face covering and must wear a face covering at all times while at school.
 - Masks must be always worn over the individual’s nose and mouth, except when eating or drinking
 - All students are required to wear face coverings: while arriving and departing from school, in any area inside and outside of the classroom, and while waiting for or riding on a school bus.
 - Students excluded from face covering requirements include students with special needs who are unable to tolerate a face covering.
 - We have posted signage in high visibility areas to remind students and staff of (1) when and where face coverings are required and (2) appropriate use of face coverings.
 - We provide face coverings for students and staff who lose their face coverings or forget to bring them to school.
 - During outside recess, students are allowed to take off their masks, as long as they maintain the appropriate Social Distancing of three to six feet.
 - As a result of extreme heat, students and staff are allowed to take off their mask.

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

- The district's plan for physical distancing follows the guidelines issued by the Governor's Executive Orders and the NJ Department of Health.
- The district has instituted the following protocols regarding physical distancing:
 - All schools and offices have signage reminding students and team members about physical distancing in prominent locations throughout each school.
 - We have trained students on protocols for physical distancing for both indoor and outdoor spaces.
 - We allow only necessary visitors in our schools and limit the number of students and staff who come into contact with them.
 - We ensure team members maintain six feet or more of distance from one another and any visitors at our schools.
- We minimize close contact between students, team members, families, and the broader community at arrival and departure through the following methods:
 - We are utilizing as many entrances and exits as can be supervised appropriately to decrease crowding at entry and exit points.
 - All drivers remain in their vehicles, to the extent possible, when dropping off or picking up students. When in-person drop-off or pick-up is needed, only a single parent or caregiver should stand outside of the facility to pick up or drop off the child.
 - All spaces have been marked six feet apart for adults waiting outside to drop off or pick up students.
 - We have the proper supervision to disperse student gatherings during school arrival and departure.
- Class sizes are as small as practicable.
- Teacher and staff desks are distanced at least three to six feet away from students' desks to minimize the risk of adult-to-child disease transmission.
- We maximize spacing between student desks:
 - Student desks in high schools are spaced six feet or more, to the extent practicable.
 - Student desks in Preschool and Elementary Schools are spaced three feet or more, to the extent practicable.
 - Ventilation has been increased by increasing outdoor air circulation (e.g., by opening any operable windows), using air purifiers and increasing ventilation rates whenever possible.
 - We have reduced the amount of furniture and equipment in the classroom to facilitate distancing and reduce high-touch surfaces.
 - Our student desks face in the same direction (and not facing each other) to minimize risk of disease transmission.
 - We ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, electronic devices, etc.) to the extent practicable, or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
 - Students' belongings are kept separate so that students do not come in contact with other students' belongings.
 - We are maximizing physical distancing between students on the bus by limiting available seats to the extent practicable (e.g., every other row available for seating).
 - Students practice physical distancing while waiting on buses at school bus stops. Students from the same family and/or the same classroom should be instructed to sit together whenever possible to minimize exposure to new contacts.
 - We have staggered restroom use by groups of students to the extent practicable, and/or assign certain groups of students to use certain restrooms.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- We teach, model, practice, and monitor handwashing, particularly for lower grade levels.
- We have developed routines to ensure students wash their hands or use hand sanitizer upon arrival to campus; after using the restroom; after playing outside and returning to the classroom.
- We have posted signage in high visibility areas to remind students and staff of proper techniques for handwashing and covering of coughs and sneezes and other prevention measures.
- We have ensured adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, face coverings and hand sanitizers (with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol) for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer.
- Grade appropriate education and modeling is provided for respiratory etiquette as per CDC guidelines.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- As part of the daily work schedules for custodians, when opening the building, key sections are cleaned first. When classes begin, custodians disinfect all classroom door knobs, bottle filling stations and bathroom fixtures. Restrooms are cleaned a minimum of two times while school is in session and one time after dismissal. High-touch areas are cleaned as often as possible while school is in session and again after dismissal. High traffic areas such as entrances and lobbies are cleaned once while school is in session and again after dismissal. Each area is cleaned additional times, as necessary. Water fountains are closed, yet bottle filling stations do remain available.
- Hand sanitizer stations are available in each classroom and in common areas throughout each building including entrances, exits, cafeterias and bathrooms. All soap and hand sanitizer stations are checked and refilled throughout the day. Students are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer throughout the day. Signage is posted throughout the buildings to encourage hand washing.
- All classrooms are provided with air purifiers that have a HEPA filter. Most classrooms are outfitted with two air purifiers that have a HEPA filter.
- All the ventilation systems are checked for proper operation. The goal is to provide as much outdoor air as possible, prevent high ventilation rates that may spread the pathogen further from the human host and minimizing or diluting the recirculated air as much as possible. In order to achieve our goals we have:
 - Increased the percentage of outdoor air as much as possible to dilute the recirculated air and minimizing the recirculated air.
 - Evaluated the using of filters with a higher MERV rating (increasing the level of filtration) when the equipment can handle it.
 - Running the equipment always in occupied mode to provide more changes of air by when the students show up.
 - Run the UVs at a slower speed to prevent/limit the projection of any possible pathogens in the air.
 - Additional filters at hand so that if necessary, do additional filter changes.
 - Lowered the setting of the systems controlled by a Carbon Dioxide On-Demand Sensor to force them to increase the amount of outdoor air.
 - Planned the addition of needlepoint bipolar ionization devices to our HVAC equipment to inactivate/kill the virus in the air and improve our filtration of particles in suspension in the room air.

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

- The school district follows the guidance issued by the Governor's Executive Orders and the NJ Department of Health regarding contact tracing and quarantines.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Temperature screenings (for students and staff) are conducted using a contactless thermometer prior to boarding the school bus and prior to entering the school.
- We have posted signs at all entrances instructing students, staff, and visitors not to enter a school if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Students or staff with any identified COVID-19 symptoms and/or a temperature of 100.3 or higher are sent home immediately until testing and/or medical evaluation has been conducted.

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

- The district partnered with the Mayor of Elizabeth and Trinitas Hospital to offer vaccines for our staff and students (age 12 and older) within the city limits. The district continues to offer vaccines on a weekly basis at the Dunn Sports Center.

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

- Any child with a severe disability or medical need that cannot attend school safely will be asked to fill out the home instruction paperwork which will be reviewed by our medical examiner to determine the best way to assist.
- Related service providers, including behaviorists and occupational therapists, will continue to provide videos and parent trainings for mask wearing for students with sensory deficits. Visuals are provided in classrooms and hallways. All classrooms are outfitted with protective wear and supplies.
- Also, any child with difficulty wearing a mask is offered a choice of other PPE to assist with any sensory needs as well.

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 Elizabeth Public Schools will return to full in-person services effective September 8, 2021. All services, inclusive of the delivery of instruction, student health, and food services will be restored to pre-pandemic status. We intend on leveraging the Federal funding made available to expand academic and enrichment opportunities to all students by providing extended-day, defined as after-school, Saturday, and summer, programs. In addition, we will provide wrap-around mental health services to our staff and students.

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)

- Elizabeth Public Schools developed an information webpage and encouraged all of its stakeholders to comment on the plan via the email address established for this purpose. Our stakeholders include parents, teachers, students, staff members, community members, union officers and others.
- Public comments on this plan were considered as Elizabeth Public Schools finalized its plan. In addition, a public comment email was made available as well (Public Comment Email: EPS.ARP2021@epsnj.org).
- Elizabeth Public Schools created a stakeholder survey in the following languages: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Arabic.
- We encouraged students, families, teachers, team members, and community members to complete an anonymous survey. Responses to the survey were reviewed for inclusion into the district's ARP ESSER plan and grant application.

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 Elizabeth Public Schools used a variety of means to communicate our plan with its diverse community. The plan was presented at a Board of Education meeting where translators were made available. In addition, several Q&A stakeholder forums were held, and translators were also made available. The plan was posted on the district website with the option to select the language of choice. In our ability to address individuals with a disability, a recorded audio/visual version of the presentation was also made available on the district webpage.