



**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): 12/15/23

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.
- In accordance with the expiration of Executive Order 251 and updated guidance from the CDC, as well as consultation with the City of Elizabeth health officer, Elizabeth Public Schools made mask wearing in school buildings optional for staff and students effective Monday, March 7, 2022.
- As has been the case since the onset of the pandemic, should further guidance be released by the New Jersey Department of Health or Department of Education, the district will collaborate with our local health official and update our health and safety protocols as appropriate.

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

- 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.

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; after using the restroom; after playing outside and returning to the classroom.
- We have ensured adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap and tissues.
- 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. 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 have been replaced by bottle filling stations.
- 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.
- 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 or goals we have:
 - Increased the percentage of outdoor air as much as possible to dilute the recirculated air and minimizing the recirculated air.
 - 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.
 - Installed 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.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Students or staff with any identified COVID-19 symptoms and/or a temperature of 100.3 or higher are sent home immediately.

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

- The district partnered with the Mayor of Elizabeth and Trinitas Hospital in 2021 to offer vaccines for students (age 12 and older) within the city limits.
- Currently, information regarding COVID 19, RSV, and Flu vaccine clinics are shared electronically with parents and also provided via monthly community updates at Board of Education meetings.

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

- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies follows the guidance issued by the NJ Department of Health.

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 returned to full in-person services on September 14, 2021. All services, inclusive of the delivery of instruction, student health, and food services were restored to pre-pandemic status. We are leveraging the Federal funding made available to expand academic and enrichment opportunities to all students by providing extended-day, defined as after-school, lunchtime, Saturday, and summer programs. In addition, we are providing 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, 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.