



## 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**

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LEA Name: Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School

Date 06/24/2021

Date Revised: (60 days) TBA

## 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 use of face coverings is recommended by both the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) as a strategy to reduce the risk of transmission. Facial coverings act as a barrier to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets. As such, all employees, students, visitors and anyone entering school or district buildings/grounds will be required to wear a face mask covering the mouth and nose. Protocol for wearing face masks include:

**DLEACS is a mask wearing facility. Wearing a face mask is required for everyone while on school or campus grounds.**

- Sterile, individualized medical grade masks will be provided to each student and staff on every school ordered day, during after care and in after school programs.
- No adult, guardian, parent or visitor will be allowed to enter the building without a mask.
- Face masks may be removed when using the restroom or during mealtimes if social distancing is maintained.
- Face masks may be removed if alone and room is closed.
- Exemptions: Students, staff or visitors for whom a face covering would inhibit the individual's health, or the individual is under two years of age. An alternative method is the use of a face shield.

- Communication with someone who is hearing impaired and needs to see the person's mouth to communicate. A mask with a clear mouthpiece is recommended.

### **Face Coverings in the classroom**

- Staff will have face shields provided for when closer proximity teaching tasks are needed (to be worn in addition to face covering- not common).

**Mask Breaks** - Teachers can incorporate 'mask breaks' during the school day.

If a child is in need of a brief mask break, the teacher will conduct a quick outdoor scan, then ask the student to step directly outside the classroom door to a predetermined spot (marked with tape) and take a 1-5 minute break, depending upon the student's needs. No more than 1 child will take a mask break at a time from each classroom.

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

To prevent the spread of the coronavirus, we must ensure social distancing. This may include limiting group sizes, creating cohorts, keeping students six feet apart, restricting non-essential visitors, and closing communal spaces. The following procedures will be in place across all our buildings:

- Desks will be rearranged in classrooms at least 6 feet apart to maximize space between students.
- 3-sided clear desk partitions will be used on student desks to help maintain social distancing.
- Signage, floor decals and colored tape may be utilized to provide visual cues and ensure procedures are followed.
- No more than two (2) people may occupy an elevator at a time.
- Buildings may consider the use of alternate spaces to accommodate in-person learning.
- Schools will assign entry and exit doors to reduce the number of students within a space.
- Recess will be staggered to decrease the number of students on the playground and in hallways.
- Breakfasts and lunches may be delivered to classrooms on disposable trays; single use utensils and individual condiments will be used.
- Water fountains will be turned off; staff and students will be offered cups for water dispensaries to hydrate.

### **DLEACS Arrival plan:**

DLEACS has an arrival time window between 8:00am and 8:15 am. At 8am all three doors will be opened at the main entrance/lobby for all students in grades K-2. Parent drop-off will begin at 8:00am. (Parents should wait to have their child(ren) disembark from their vehicle until they are signaled by the

educators on duty. Educators will lead to ensure proper social distancing procedures are followed. Buses will arrive and begin unloading at 8:00am buses open doors once signaled one at a time. Students walking to school can arrive at any point during the staggered entry window. **Arrival Considerations:**

- School entrance doors will be propped open during arrival to avoid a slowing/grouping of individuals at the door (also to reduce common touch door handle).
- Bus Riders - should disembark once they arrive at school (no lingering / waiting on parked bus).
- Beginning at 8:15am, all students should go straight to their classrooms once they arrive.
  - Staff will encourage students to maintain a 6 foot distance while walking.
  - Students will be supervised in their classroom by their teacher.
  - Families should adhere to the arrival schedule and not drop off their children prior to their designated drop-off time.
- Non-essential visitors (i.e. parents/guardians dropping students off) will not be permitted to enter the school building. Those needing to speak with the office staff will be directed to call. Individuals dropping students off by car, should remain in their vehicle. Individuals walking students to school should leave once the student is delivered - no lingering on campus.

#### **DLEACS Entrance plan:**

##### **K-2**

##### **Kindergarten**

Enter through main lobby door #1: A teacher's assistant will be positioned in the main lobby monitoring the physical distance between students.

**Grade 1** Enter through main lobby door #2: Greet students and observe for proper, mask exchange in classroom. PPE station #2

**Grade 2** Enter through main lobby door #3: Greet students, observe for proper hand sanitizing, and mask exchange. PPE station #3

##### **Grades 3-5**

- 3-5 will enter through the playground gate and proceed along the painted dashed lines to the exterior classroom doors.

##### **Grades 6-8**

The entrance for our middle school students will be through the Michael E. Maher Community Center (gym) on Ocean Avenue.

- Support staff will be assigned to various locations throughout the school in order to support this process and provide supervision and parent guidance for those dropping off their child(ren).
- Classroom teachers will be stationed at their interior/exterior doors and will welcome students into the room.
- Families wanting to drop-off/pickup their children are encouraged to drive and remain in their vehicle. Should families want to meet their student outside of their vehicle, they will need to park in an appropriate space or along the street, then don a mask, and meet their child at the front of the school. Family members are asked to socially distance themselves from other parents while waiting. Once reunited with their child, family members will need to immediately exit the playground; the playground will not be open before or after school for play.

### **Physical Distancing in the classroom**

Each classroom is structured to support 6-foot distancing especially when seated and to limit movement about the classroom that creates less than 6 feet of distance.

- Individual student desks are in place (versus group tables)
- Individual student desks have Plexiglas barriers attached.
- Student desks are arranged with 6 feet of distance between (measured head-to-head)
- Student desks are facing the same direction.
- The teacher's desk/teaching areas are 6 feet from student desks.

All instructional and non-instructional rooms in buildings will comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.

### **Physical Distancing in Reception and Common Areas:**

- DLEACS installed a plexiglass barrier where security greets the public. This spans a large free-standing countertop and extends 6.5 feet high from the floor. There is a plexiglass barrier at our secretary desk.
- Only one outside person can be in the office in front of the secretary's desk at any given time. Remaining visitors/students will wait in a queue, marked with placement dots outside the security desk near the office door.
- Staff communicate with secretaries via phone or email.

Mounted a plastic barrier between the two secretaries' desks. Secretaries will clean their respective side of the plastic barrier daily. Secretary stations are viewed as a communal center desk that they would like to continue to use (versus other mitigation strategies of moving this area) understanding the exposure risks of closure contact. A plastic barrier was provided

## **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

One of the most effective practices for preventing exposure and reducing transmission of the infection is regular hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer. The district is implementing the following procedures:

- Foaming hand sanitizer will be available throughout the campus and in every building. Handwashing is encouraged by students and staff regularly. Signage is posted across the campus encouraging the same.
- Hygiene - hand sanitizer is available in the lobby and commons areas of the campus.

## **Respiratory Etiquette**

- All students, faculty and staff will always wear masks while on DLEACS' campus.
- Individual student desk shields are mounted on all student and teacher desks.
- Students will be reminded of respiratory etiquette.

## **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.**

School buildings will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Custodial staff will provide on-going disinfecting to high contact surfaces such as student desks and chairs, doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, soap dispensers and faucet knobs using hospital grade disinfectant and electrostatic sprayers. • Custodial staff will complete a cleaning/sanitizing checklist.

- All buildings will receive electrostatic disinfecting treatments from backpack misting machines.
- Custodial staff will routinely clean and disinfect high contact areas.
- Custodial staff will maintain supplies such as soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels.
- Teachers and students will work together with custodial staff to promote a clean and healthy environment for everyone within each building. Each classroom will have sanitation kits that will include gloves and disinfectant wipes. Students and teachers shall wipe down any community or high-touch areas after each class to reduce exposure for the next classroom.
- Facilities manager will routinely replace air filters to increase air ventilation.

### **Cleaning and maintaining health facilities**

Our facilities maintenance director oversees a team of maintenance/ janitorial personnel which maintain our campus buildings. The team:

- Adheres to existing required cleaning practices, procedures and any new specific requirements of the local health department or any other such jurisdiction having authority, as they arise.
- Follows the CDC procedures that includes cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, disinfected and methods and materials to be used.

### **Ventilation**

- All buildings will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component, therefore windows will be opened, if practical. Filter(s) will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Air purifying systems are installed in classrooms.
- New windows will be installed in the cafeteria which currently does not introduce 100% fresh air into the large space.
- An air purifying system will be installed in the theatre, which currently does not have HVAC.

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

DLEACS is collaborating with the Jersey City Department of Health to conduct contact tracing. Upon notification of a positive case, the employee or student should notify the school nurse. The school nurse will communicate with school level administration, as appropriate, to track movement of the person who tested positive. Impacted individuals will be notified. The principal will also be notified and along with the Director of Facilities to determine whether to close the facility or any portion thereof. All affected areas will be cleaned and sanitized prior to reopening. In-person students will engage in remote learning during the closure so that instruction continues without disruption.

DLEACS utilizes Qualtrix software for a daily survey tracking measure to qualify staff are fit to be present on campus each morning. All applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational records (e.g., FERPA) will be adhered to. The school follows recommendations of the local health department. The school nurse and assistant school business administrator oversee daily COVID-19 survey. The principal, in consultation with the Health Department, will notify the school community of confirmed cases, when applicable. The school nurse will be the contact for students, their families, and staff when reporting COVID-19 cases. The school nurse will then report COVID-19 cases to the principal, CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and assistant school business administrator. Additionally, the school nurse will share the completed COVID-19 close contact spreadsheet. DLEACS will follow state reporting procedures.

## **Isolation and Quarantine Measures**

Medically fragile – checked every hour.

- Students/staff exhibiting COVID19 symptoms isolated & sent home
- Return after 24 hours after fever breaks and/or isolation period is successfully completed
- School district must work with local department of health after learning of positive COVID-19 test for student, staff, and visitors
- School safety specialists have free access to Johns Hopkins 3-hour contact tracing course and receive credit towards required training:  
<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/contacttracing>

## **F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

Screening Procedures for Students and Staff

Screenings take place in the main building lobby, campus courtyard and gym – including COVID-19 questions. **See student/parent questions here.**

Temperature scans are given to each child upon arrival to school. The school district will adhere to the local CDC and local health department regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure.

**See visitor questions here.**

### **Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff**

The district will encourage parents to keep their child home when he/she is sick. Suspected COVID cases will be determined by state criteria. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated. Students should remain in isolation with supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult. State Isolation and Quarantine guidelines will be followed. If the school becomes aware that a COVID-19 positive individual has spent time in school during the contagious period, the school will follow the Contact Tracing procedures.

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

DLEACS collaborated with the local department of health and human services department to schedule its teachers, staff and faculty for vaccinations. As a result, 42 staff signed up for the Moderna vaccine. The school continues ongoing consultation with the local health department to encourage parents and staff get vaccinated. Information is disseminated through e-mails, on Class Dojo and on our the website detailing updates on vaccination centers and schedules.

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

The IEP team reviewed each Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) this year as we implemented hybrid and virtual programs to assure that goals and objectives could be obtained and address the issues brought on by the pandemic. Appropriate accommodations included, for example, specific goals and objectives to help students wear a mask for an increasing amount of time, address personal hygiene, and assist in understanding the concept of social distancing, all of which were introduced into student's IEP's. In addition, virtual therapeutic services such as OT, PT and speech were integrated into a child's virtual programming to address specific goals and additional virtual instructional sessions scheduled to ensure that the recommendation minutes of instruction were delivered. We will continue to monitor progress in each student's goals and objectives in the 21-22 academic year and we will continue to make any accommodations needed to ensure their health and safety.

## 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)

DLEACS will continue to utilize our multi-tiered system of support for academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

DLEACS will utilize formative assessments and use the data to address student's individual learning gaps and needs.

**DLEACS will use ESSER funds to expand academic, social emotional and mental health programming.**

- We will implement a new social, emotional, track of courses for students.
- We will initiate and mental health program to support students and staff.

**Food services**

- We will provide free lunch to students over the summer at our summer bridge program.

### **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).

DLEACS Safe Reopening Plan is derived from a series of school executive team meetings, public survey and comments through public website forums posted throughout the COVID-19 effected school closures. The solutions offered are the result of building blocks created through the several plans for reopening required via executive order.

The public will have the opportunity to comment on the Safe Reopen Plan, once again, in its final phases, at the board meeting scheduled for August 24, 2021. Prior to the meeting a draft of the proposed plan will be shared with the community. Input from the public will be taken into consideration by the board and administration and, if warranted, changes will be made in the draft 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)

DLEACS Safe Reopening Plan will be shared via the website. Our website can be translated in multiple languages via a toggle button on top.

Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (736 of 1000 maximum characters used)

DLEACS will contract with Lavinia Group for a five (5) week summer intensive to increase math and ELA literacy. The Lavinia Group will also partner with DLEACS principal and the cluster leaders in Grades K-8 to design the academic strategy for the 2021-2022 school year. Additionally, the Lavinia Group will coach cluster leaders to take on a greater role in developing and instructionally managing teachers in the 2021-2022 school year. Beginning in Fall, 2021 the Lavinia Group will provide highly effective protocols for studying data and student work and action planning to rapidly improve across cluster. Curriculum Associates (iReady) will offer professional development so teachers may learn how to better measure student growth.