



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.

Blairstown Elementary School fully intends to open five full days for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. Also, the district will follow all protocols to ensure the safety of students, staff, and all stakeholders

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that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.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 Name: Blairstown School District

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 05/27/2021

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:

- As per Governor Murphy's [Executive Order 251](#), all students, staff and visitors are required to wear a mask while in the building and on the school bus, unless they have medical documentation excusing the use of a mask. Masks will be optional when staff and students are outside, during gym, lunch, and extreme heat. Also, teachers will provide mask breaks throughout the duration of the school day.
- **Virtual Learning:**
 - Governor Murphy has rescinded portions of Executive Order 175 which allowed for a remote learning option for families. Therefore, virtual learning will only take place if a student needs to quarantine due to having COVID-19 or exposure to a positive individual. This is only for quarantining purposes and does not include individual sick days or vacations.

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

- Per current CDC and NJDOH recommendations, all students will be socially distant.
- In elementary schools, CDC recommends all students remain at least 3 feet apart in classrooms where mask use is universal — regardless of whether community transmission is low, moderate, substantial, or high.
- BES is able to maintain more than the minimum recommended 3 ft. for social distancing in all classrooms and will return to five full day instruction.
- Lunch will be at normal time. One grade will have lunch as the other will go to recess then they will switch.
- Halls will be divided for more productive traffic flow with signage reminding students to remain social distant.
- During periods of time when social distancing is not feasible within the classroom setting, a clear barrier between staff and students will be provided.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

- Signage and instruction for appropriate hand washing protocols will be provided and reviewed with all students.
- All signs will be placed throughout the school, classrooms, and bathrooms.
- Visual alerts regarding respiratory etiquette will be:
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
 - Reminders to wash your hands throughout the day.
- Hand Sanitizer will be available in all classrooms, in the front entrance of the building, recess exit/entrance, Schaare Wing entrance, front side entrance, cafeteria, gym, bathrooms, and at designated spots throughout the hallways.

- Wipes will be available for students in every classroom.
- Clear and visible signs indicating social distancing, hygiene practices and traffic flow will be visible throughout the school building in various areas at height appropriate to the students in that grade level.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

- The district has developed a schedule to ensure extra cleaning and disinfecting takes place throughout the school.
- Extra custodial staff has been hired to help clean the building throughout the duration of the school day.
- All cleaning products are used according to the directions on the label.

Classrooms:

- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily utilizing electrostatic sprayers.
- Classrooms will be supplied with disinfecting wipes (EPA approved) for intermittent cleaning by staff of commonly touched areas.
- Custodians will utilize electrostatic sprayers to clean all student and teacher desks, door handles, handrails, light switches, computers, keyboards, tables, and seating areas.

Restrooms:

- Bathrooms will be cleaned on a regular schedule consistent with protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Bathrooms will be disinfected at minimum daily using the electrostatic sprayer. This frequency will be adjusted with the use of a given bathroom facility.
- BES will have all student hallway bathroom doors propped open to limit personal contact.
- Water bottles will be used in lieu of the water fountains. Students are encouraged to bring their own daily supply of water, but the district will maintain a small reserve of water bottles on hand for any student who may forget their own.

Ventilation:

- All units are checked once a month and serviced when needed.
- Air filters are changed every three months using the recommended MERV.
- The units are equipped with exhaust fans with a fresh air intake.
- Windows are open throughout the building when the weather allows.

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

- In regards to quarantine during an outbreak or exposure to COVID-19, the contact tracing team at BES will notify all individuals deemed close contacts of a positive or presumptive positive individual of the need to quarantine, following current timeframes set forth from local and state health departments.
- A list of close contacts will be submitted to the local health department for follow up with county contact tracing as needed.
- The nurse will work closely with local contact tracers and the health department to ascertain when readmittance to school of affected individuals is appropriate.
- If a positive individual is in school, they will be taken to a designated isolation room to await pick up. Universal precautions will be utilized.
- Rooms and areas affected by the positive individual or individuals will be cleaned and disinfected following current guidance set forth by NJDOH in Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Department for K-12 Schools.
- Weekly report is submitted to CDRSS by the nurse regarding positive cases of staff and students at BES.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Diagnostic testing for Covid-19 will not be done in the district.
- Symptom screening and recommendations for testing will be done by the school nurse
- The most current guidelines from the New Jersey Department of Health will be followed.

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

- BES will not provide on site vaccination for COVID-19.
- Resources regarding the vaccination have been forwarded to the staff.
- As of Governor Murphy's [Executive Order 253](#), all school staff will be required to be vaccinated or provide a weekly negative COVID-19 Test starting 10/18/2021.

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

- Routines and support are in place to assist students with hand washing and use of hand sanitizers.
- Direct instruction in social distancing and personal cleanliness and wellness is provided daily.
- Social Stories regarding health and safety policies are presented to the children.
- Adult and peer modeling of mask wearing, social distancing sanitization methods.
- Positive reinforcers (i.e. praise, behavior charts, parent contact).
- If recommended by NJDOH, Students will be provided with individual materials, resources, and toys/manipulatives to be used during school.
- Any common use areas will be sanitized between student usage.
- When adults are closer than 3 feet in distance when working with a student, a plexiglass barrier or face shield will be utilized.

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 Blairstown School District will continue to implement interventions that will ensure continuity of service, including services that address students' academic needs, and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. Students will return to five full days starting September 7th, 2021.

The district will be utilizing our Linkit! benchmarks, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels to determine starting points for students at the start of the school year. Beginning in September, the district will be incorporating an RtI intervention period in our daily schedule for all students. This will assist in building students skills on an individual basis.

Staff will be provided professional development in how to diagnose writing and reading data then develop strategies to support student learning. Professional development will also be provided in Tier I RtI strategies as well as social emotional learning, including the Character Strong curriculum. Our students will have access to counseling with our guidance counselor throughout the year. The district will be creating a student and teacher culture and climate team to enhance our SEL program.

Students will have access to free lunch until June 30, 2022 through the SSO 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)

The Blirstown Elementary School will post this plan on our website once approved by the Blirstown BOE. .

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 plan is designed to be user friendly and accurately describe, in plain language, the measures that will be taken for safe reopening in September, 2021. Many of these practices have been in place since September, 2020, when the district re-opened for in-person learning. Translations can be made available in any language using google translate and an individual with a disability can be provided with appropriate accommodations such as read-aloud technology, etc.