



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

LEA Name: Mastery Charter Schools of Camden

Date: 06/16/2021

Date Revised: 11/18/2022

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

Currently, local, state, and national health departments have no masking requirement.

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

Currently, local, state, and national health departments have no physical distancing requirement.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Recent CDC guidance emphasizes the importance of handwashing over surface cleaning as a more critical prevention strategy. Students and staff must maintain proper handwashing hygiene throughout the school day by utilizing hand sanitizer and washing their hands regularly. (For example after using the bathroom, before/after eating and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.)

Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer stations should be in placed in high-traffic areas so that students and staff can wash or sanitize their hands as much as needed. Hand sanitizer should have at least 60% alcohol and be placed at the front desk and one per classroom and office spaces, outside of bathrooms and in high traffic areas.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Mastery hired third-party environmental consultants to conduct a thorough review of every school’s ventilation system and indoor air quality to minimize transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Schools that had HVAC systems that could be brought to ASHRAE standards by using existing ventilation and filtration systems. In other schools, we use plasma air filters (which remove 99%+ of COVID virus). A school-by-school evaluation report is published on our website.

Daily Cleaning Includes: Classrooms, Desks & Chairs, Floor sweeping and mopping, Front desk, Visitor waiting room, Break rooms, copy machines, nursing offices, bathrooms, doors, etc.

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

Currently, local, state, and national health departments have no physical distancing requirement.

F. Testing

We carefully monitor for symptoms, and then take action to isolate positive cases and quarantine all close contacts. We also offer optional, take home rapid tests in case of symptoms or known exposure.

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

All adults and students in the Mastery network have been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated multiple times at clinics both on campus and off campus. Being vaccinated is currently not a requirement for employment at Mastery but is strongly recommended.

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

Staff and students working with children with disabilities are given PPE and additional supplies and a routine safety checklist that includes the following routines:

- Using PPE
- Drop-off and pick-up

- Hand washing
- Toileting and hygiene
- Cleaning supplies and commonly used areas
- Reporting covid-19 illness during the school day and quarantine room logistics
- Attendance/substitute plans

Staff are also trained extensively on these routines that are specific to working with students with disabilities. Students who have medical conditions can still attend school in person or can select to attend the fully virtual program. Families will make the most appropriate decision for their student. Parents with students with a medical condition are strongly encouraged to contact the school, notify them of their child's condition, and send a note to the school nurse with instructions.

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)

Mastery will continue a variety of services to maintain the safety, health, and well-being of all its students. These services include:

- ESY services
- Providing students with grade-level materials, tasks, and assignments along with the necessary supports to support all learners
- Designing instructional plans that are flexible and utilize the strengths of school leaders, teachers, students, and family and community members
- Providing professional learning that equips leaders, staff, substitutes, students and parent/caregivers with all of the resources needed to adapt to the changing educational needs of our schools

Mastery will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure decisions are made transparently and collaboratively so that all students' learning and well-being is prioritized.

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)

To collect and incorporate stakeholder feedback, Mastery commenced planning process for the '21-'22 school year with 9 listening sessions involving over 500 people including 120 parents, 35 students, and 80 teachers and staff. The overwhelming sentiment was that we need to have both an urgent focus on academic acceleration and a comprehensive approach to supporting students' social-emotional needs.

Most recently, we held optional staff roundtables and sent a COVID response survey to all Mastery employees to gather information on their experience and recommendations.

We are continually refining the details of our plan to incorporate the feedback of our key stakeholders and other members of the public. It is our goal to be responsive to the needs and desires of our students, families, and staff.

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)

Mastery has ensured that our plan is presented in a clear and easily digestible written format. Our plan is written in English and available for translation in Spanish and six other languages spoken by members of our school communities via our website. To the extent a member of our school community with limited reading proficiency (in English or any other language) requires assistance understanding the document, the plan will be orally read and explained by a member of our staff or professional interpreter. Mastery will meet any request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, providing the plan in an alternative format that is fully accessible to that parent.

Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (1 of 1000 maximum characters used)

Families & staff receive weekly email updates about our planning processes and opportunities to share their input. Our website is maintained on a weekly basis to be reflective of the latest plans and updates. Our social media accounts are used to share important news and updates with families real-time.