

# 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.

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that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.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 Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services**

**LEA Name: Philip's Academy Charter School of Paterson**

**Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/11/2021**

**Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):**

### **1. Maintaining Health and Safety**

#### **A. Universal and correct wearing of masks**

Philip's Academy mandates mask wearing at all times within our buildings and also in our outdoor play areas. Further, Philip's Academy will continue this mandate into next school year. In order to protect our students who are not yet eligible for the vaccine, Philip's Academy is diligent in enforcing our mask wearing requirements. Visuals are posted throughout the building displaying proper mask wearing (covering nose and mouth) and reminders are provided to both students and staff as needed.

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

Philip's Academy follows all CDC guidelines and at this time, all students are distanced at least three feet within our classrooms. Further, the school has provided plastic shield dividers for each child. When eating, students are at least 6 feet apart. Students are also podded into one homeroom class and students remain with that class throughout the school day. Additionally, for less structured times, such as lunch and recess, students also remain with their pods.

#### **C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

All members of the Philip's Academy team are encouraged to wash hands before eating and after the use of the restroom. Further, hand sanitizing stations have been implemented throughout the buildings, including in all classrooms, offices, and hallways. Signs are posted near sinks within the school to demonstrate proper hand washing guidelines.

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

Philip's Academy has a full time cleaning staff who cleans the building daily, as well as a contracted team for a weekly deep cleaning. Further, individualVollara ventilation units have been installed in all classrooms, offices and dining halls.

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

Philip's Academy's contact tracing procedure includes that when someone becomes symptomatic or when someone reports a COVID case or prolonged, direct exposure, that person immediately notifies the principal and the school nurse. The school nurse shall then evaluate the situation and immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality when the COVID-19 test is positive.

Should an individual exhibit COVID 19 symptoms while in the school building, the school nurse will ensure that the student or staff member is taken to the designated isolation area. The nurse will examine the individual and may refer them for testing and treatment. A student or staff member exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 may be required to submit to a COVID 19 test. The school nurse shall require the certification of a physician that the student is contagion free before readmitting a student to school. The nurse shall report all students testing positive for COVID 19 to the health department. The health department shall conduct the contact tracing.

\*All procedures will adhere to applicable federal and state law and regulations regarding privacy and the confidentiality of records. Further, the school nurse shall consult with the local health department in the development, review and revision of the district contact tracing policy and procedures.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Philip's Academy contracts with Concentric by Ginko to participate in pooled COVID testing. Through pooled testing (which requires parental consent) the school is then able to identify if a member of a classroom, pod, or staff is positive for COVID. If the pool comes back positive, the school is then able to conduct the necessary contact tracing and quarantines for the impact persons. This measure is particularly critical in keeping our community safe as due to the age of our students, they are not yet eligible for the COVID vaccine.

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

Philip's Academy is partnering with Walgreens to set up a vaccination clinic at the school on Friday, June 11th, in which the Pfizer vaccine will be provided. The second dose will occur at Philip's Academy on Friday, July 2nd. Further, the school will continue to assist families and staff in securing appointments for the COVID 19 vaccine.

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

Should a child or staff member not be able to adhere to the mask wearing requirement due to a documented health need, an accommodation can be made and additional protective equipment will be provided (i.e. face shield, plastic barriers).

## **2. Ensuring Continuity of Services**

Philip's Academy will continue to provide students with intensive academic and social/emotional support. Academic support will include strong Tier 1 instruction for all, as well as small group reading intervention for those significantly behind grade level. Further, all students will continue to receive a one to one device (either an iPad in kindergarten or a Chromebook in first - fifth grade). In the event that a child has to quarantine due to a COVID 19 case or a direct, prolonged exposure, the child will still have access to online learning.

Further, Philip's Academy employs two full time social workers who will provide students with counseling and social groups as needed. All students will also receive weekly Character Education classes from their homeroom teachers. Additionally, the school is partnering with an outside menthol health agency to provide students and families with wrap around care. Lastly, all students will continue to receive free lunches through the school's food provider Red Rabbit.

## **3. Public Comment**

Philip's Academy has surveyed parents on aspects of the Safe Return Plan. Additionally, the plan has been sent to parents, presented at our June 22 board meeting, and shared on the school's website.

The majority of Philip's Academy Paterson families who speak a second language are Spanish speaking. Additionally, we serve a small population of families who are Arabic speaking. The Safe Return Plan document is translated into Spanish and is posted on our school website. While we work on a full Arabic translation of the plan, a translated section of the introduction informs Arabic speaking families that they can seek oral translation by contacting the school.