

Wayne Public Schools: American Rescue Plan Updated Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service

January 13, 2022 - Board of Education Meeting

Dr. Mark Toback - Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Donna Reichman - Assistant Superintendent of Schools



American Rescue Plan / ESSER

Reopening of Schools Plan



Requirements

- ❑ **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.**
- ❑ **LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.**

Section 1 – Maintaining Health and Safety (Cont.)

A. Mask Guidance (Revised 01/13/2022) ** On January 11th, the Governor reinstated the public health emergency by issuing Executive Orders 280 and 281, which continue Executive orders 251 and 253 and the existing masking and staff vaccination requirements in schools.

The district continues to follow state and local guidance regarding masks. Current NJ guidance states wearing masks is an important prevention strategy to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with everyday preventive actions and social distancing in public settings. Masks must be worn indoors by staff, students, and visitors in all situations except as delineated in EO 251. This includes physical education classes, prior to boarding the school bus, while on the bus, and until students are completely off the bus. In general, students or staff do not need to wear masks outdoors, including during outdoor physical education classes or school sports. However, schools may encourage the use of masks during outdoor activities that involve sustained close contact with other individuals or during periods of high community transmission. All buildings have signage and picture displays requiring and modeling proper mask-wearing. This information is also displayed on our COVID Update webpage. Nursing and educational staff consistently reinforce the appropriate mask-wearing as necessary throughout the school day.

B. Physical Distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) (Revised 01/13/2022)

Physical distancing recommendations from the NJDOH are implemented to the maximum degree that allows for all Wayne Schools to offer full in-person learning. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet in the classroom, other prevention/mitigation strategies are enforced. The physical distancing of 3 feet to the maximum degree possible, combined with masking for all individuals per EO 251 has been in place since the start of the 2021 school year. During meals offered in the cafeteria or other group dining areas, where masks may not be worn, layered prevention strategies are enforced during periods of high transmission to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These include: Maximizing physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors, grab-and-go lunches avoid buffet/serving stations and staggered eating times as much as possible to allow for physical distancing. Enhanced cleaning protocols are in place to ensure frequently touched surfaces are regularly disinfected and surfaces that come in contact with food are washed and sanitized before and after meals.

Section 1 – Maintaining Health and Safety (Cont.)

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette are taught and reinforced. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increased monitoring of students. Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer) is readily available.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation remains a top priority. HVAC settings to increase air circulation along with open windows and doors when practical is enforced to increase air circulation in the area. The district continues to discourage the use of shared classroom supplies, equipment, and high-touch materials. There is daily disinfection of surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. ARP-ESSER funds have been utilized to upgrade HVAC and air quality systems.

Section 1 – Maintaining Health and Safety (Cont.)

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

The District follows the NJDOH guidance for identifying close contacts. Information is gathered from multiple sources to ensure accuracy to the best of our ability. Sources may include direct observations by staff and students, established seating charts, and security camera footage.

Upon notification of a positive case of COVID-19, the district excludes unvaccinated close contacts from the school/workplace. Isolation and quarantine protocols and timeframes are established in collaboration with the local Department of Health based on current State guidance. Nurses and principals are well versed in best practices for contact tracing and notification and strive to make timely notifications. If a determination of close contacts cannot be made in a timely manner, the entire class may be temporarily quarantined until such time. Wayne Township's nursing supervisor is also in continual communication, consultation, and collaboration with the Wayne Township Board of Health to make determinations and issue guidance on isolation and quarantine cases. We have internal documents to ensure reports and tracing are recorded immediately and tracked to ensure the safety of our staff and students at all times. Trends or potential outbreak circumstances result in immediate consultation with local health officials to provide guidance on classroom or school closure decisions.

Section 1 – Maintaining Health and Safety (Cont.)

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

During all levels of community transmission the district works with the department of health to identify testing options of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Diagnostic testing has been done through referral to Passaic County testing sites, and other available locations as identified by the Wayne Township Department of Health. All district employees must provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing weekly to screen for COVID-19. The district has also extended the offer for free testing at the environmental center at 50 Nellis Drive for any employee or student who wishes to be tested, whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated. Individuals with symptoms compatible with those of COVID-19 must test negative and/or meet criteria for return as set forth by the NJDOH before resuming in-person instruction or work, regardless of their vaccination status. The SIS system and Google platform are used to collect, analyze, and report testing-related data for school-based operational decisions.

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

Wayne Township offers a local vaccine clinic. The district worked closely with the township to offer local vaccination times for staff and families.

Section 1 – Maintaining Health and Safety (Cont.)

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

Students, teachers, and paraprofessionals follow CDC and local universal precautions to prevent COVID exposure within their classrooms.

Students have been given mask breaks outside to ensure that the tolerance for mask-wearing increased and continued. Teachers utilize social stories and provide mask education to students. Teachers and paraprofessionals assist students with mask-wearing and hand washing when needed. Transportation for these students also follows universal precautions. As with other areas in this plan, when new guidance or best practices offer enhanced protocols, the Wayne Schools will implement updated support and procedures for our classified students and special education staff.

Section 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.

The district has taken numerous steps to address academic intervention, provide acceleration, and ensure the mental health of staff and students is considered and addressed. At the onset of this process, each bargaining unit was consulted to discuss the grant plan and solicit input and feedback. The Thoughtexchange software program was used to gather input and comments from participating Wayne Township Public School stakeholders. Since the first draft of the plan, summer programs were offered to English Language Learners, classified students, and general education students in both core academic subjects and enrichment programs. Since the onset of the year, these efforts have continued with schools at all three levels offering either in-day support or additional/supplemental services for students who need additional instructional contact time. The efforts to boost enrichment time have also continued in literacy and STEM/STEAM activities. The district also offers additional layers of support for classified, ELL, homeless/displaced, and economically disadvantaged students. More programs are being planned for the Spring session of classes based on information collected at the schools to support the current needs of our students. With respect to students' mental health, parent surveys and school-based referral data have been collected to address student wellness in an ongoing manner. Additional counselors were hired at the high school level and more counseling support is planned at the middle school and elementary levels. The district provided additional articulation hours for a team of school counselors from around the district to analyze our current efforts, ensure consistency, and plan for welcoming students back in September. More articulation is planned to address socioemotional and wellness concerns. The district also planned to add a higher tier of in-building clinical counseling for students in need. The Rutgers University program to provide more intensive counseling for referred students had begun in middle school, but it was phased out due to a lack of staffing at the university. The district is currently meeting with mental health providers to offer this additional, free service in the second half of the year.

Section 3 – Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments 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.

The district has, on a continuing basis, offered public comment on all phases of the school reopening, instructional support, and safety plans at public board meetings. Each plan has been presented and posted for public and board review and then comment portions are offered to refine and evaluate current planning efforts. Several surveys have also been conducted on various educational and safety topics. This version of the plan is inclusive of several programs and initiatives already presented and approved by the Wayne Township Board of Education and is set for final review and comment at the January 13, 2022 board of education meeting prior to our 1/15/2022 submission.

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.

The district has taken every effort to include all stakeholders in developing, writing, and evaluating plans, inclusive of ensuring the plans are easy to understand and accessible for all families. Each version of the plan has been reviewed at public board meetings, explained, opened for comment, amended, and posted on the district website which allows all posted documents to be translated into other languages using the Google translate bar at the top of our website.

Additional Considerations and Planning

We will continue to keep you informed as we receive any new information from the New Jersey Department of Education and Wayne Department of Health.

We are extremely grateful for our illustrious team of nurses, counselors, CST members, teachers, support staff, and principals who were on the front lines every day to keep our buildings open and students safe.

