

Quinton Twp. School 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: Quinton Township School

Date (06/14/2021):

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

The QTS requires that masks be worn in classrooms, academic and administrative buildings, office settings, and when physical distancing is not possible on school grounds. Face coverings will be required for students or staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health. The QTS will adhere to the most conservative elements of local, state, and federal guidelines regarding our protocols for universal and correct mask-wearing.

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

The QTS acknowledges that since people can spread illnesses before they know they are sick it is important to stay three feet away from others when possible. Therefore, physical distancing, when possible, is required throughout our schools. The QTS will adhere to the most conservative elements of local, state, and federal guidelines regarding our protocols for physical distancing. The CDC reports that “COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about six feet) for a period of more than 15 minutes.”

- Students/desks utilized will maintain 3 feet distance, from the center of each desk to the center of the next desk when possible
- Desks should all face in the same direction
- No soft materials are permitted
- Facilities have been measured and configured so that classes and meetings can take place with physical distancing when possible
- Large gatherings outside of classroom/non-instructional/therapy room settings will be avoided until CDC guidelines specify otherwise.
- When it is not possible to control ingress and egress in certain school areas, students and faculty will be directed to maintain social distancing and wear masks when leaving or entering classes
- Visual cues, including signage, colored tape, floor markings, and other indicators, will be placed throughout our school buildings to help people maintain appropriate distancing and to remind them of other key safety measures
- Eliminate, when possible, the use of shared materials. When materials must be shared, cleaning between uses is essential.
- Set up areas where students can store personal items that keep them isolated from use by others

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Staff and students should continue frequent handwashing. Hand sanitizing stations should be utilized when hand washing is not readily available. Students should cover their cough and sneeze, and wash their hands after. In addition, students who are feeling ill should remain at home.

All members of our school community should be familiar with COVID-19 information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including: (as referenced at: www.CDC.gov) COVID-19 Symptoms; How to Protect Yourself and Others; What to Do If You Are Sick; People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CDC advises the use of respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette, as well as regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol via the sanitized stations in each classroom and at each building entrance.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The QTS will undertake enhanced cleaning of school facilities and offices, with a focus on common areas and high-touch locations.

Academic/Common Areas:

- Classrooms will be deep cleaned daily. Additionally, all horizontal surfaces and high contact points such as door handles, chair arms, etc., will be disinfected
- High contact points will also be disinfected midday (while students are at lunch)
- All classrooms will have cleaning supplies available for the cleaning of personal spaces. While custodial staff will clean on a regular basis, faculty and students may clean their personal areas (for example: desk, chair) at the start of class
- Hand sanitizer will be easily accessible in each classroom and in common areas
- Common spaces such as bathrooms, lobbies, and halls will be deep cleaned daily. Additionally, all horizontal surfaces and high contact points such as door handles, faucets, light switches, etc. in the common areas will be disinfected.

All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided. Filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed every two months.

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

School nurse will conduct contract tracing where applicable, in accordance with the local health department guidelines. Isolation and quarantine should follow local and state protocols. Isolation rooms should be equipped with negative pressure, or air filtration systems to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and necessary PPE.

Contact Tracing Protocol:

Process:

(NOTE: Monitoring/updates to be provided by school physician)

1. School Nurses contact the Salem County Health Department for Contact Tracing
2. Contacts/Cohort information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department
3. Attendance information will be shared with the Salem County Health Department
4. Student, staff, team and bus cohorts will be informed and immediately placed on quarantine based on CDC and Salem County Health Department Recommendations.
5. Students/staff will be readmitted to school according to NJDOH and Salem County Department of Health guidance.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Schools will engage parents in monitoring daily the identified possible symptoms of COVID-19 listed within CDC guidance frameworks. In the classroom, teachers will make a deliberate effort to monitor health without running through the list of symptoms and then refer children with concerns to the office or nurse for further monitoring. Schools will also monitor the health of staff and students by tracking students' mandated contact tracing and rates of absenteeism. Students and staff who are vaccinated for COVID-19 may voluntarily send a photo of their vaccination card to the school nurse. The school nurse puts the immunization information on the student/staff school immunization record. Upon 14 days from the date of the second dose, quarantining is not required upon exposure. The QTS will continue to follow all CDC guidance regarding length of vaccine protection, and quarantine procedures

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

All staff will be encouraged to get vaccinated. Students will be vaccinated at their parent/guardian's discretion. Students and staff who are vaccinated for COVID-19 may voluntarily send a photo of their vaccination card to the school nurse. The school nurse puts the immunization information on the student/staff school immunization record.

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

The QTS will provide all mandated ADA accommodations, and provide educators with professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based and in-person formats. The school district will continue to ensure students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of IEP and 504 Plans.

The QTS will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals that the CDC identifies as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including older adults (aged 65 years and older) and individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions, or medically necessary exemptions from COVID mitigation protocols. The QTS is committed to ensuring the appropriate delivery of Special Education and Related Services to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.

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 QTS will ensure continuity of services for all sub-groups and mitigate learning gaps via curricular acceleration. The district will plan, design and implement Extended Learning Opportunities to provide struggling students with small-group instruction delivered by highly effective teachers. The QTS will build a sustainable, tiered intervention model of school-based mental health supports and services to positively impact students in all sub-groups. Via SEL learning, our model will embed mental health in our school into an equitable system of supports to enhance the fit of mental health concerns and to fully promote social-emotional learning while comprehensively addressing any barriers. The QTS will apply for grants to continue offering access to free breakfasts and lunch for our students.

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. (1000 character limit)

The QTS has provided multiple opportunities for public comment on our plan. Our QTS Restart Committee commenced in July 2020, including members of the Board, Administrative Team, Teachers Association and Parents, to gather community input. Input on the plan was sought during the Public Comment Segment at the June 2021 Regular Meeting of the QTS Board of Education. QTS has a Safety/Pandemic Response Team that includes teachers, counselors, nurses, CST, principal, school safety specialist, custodian, and parents.

Public Comment Summary:

Maintain procedures that are in place to maintain a safe and supportive school environment by the challenges posted by COVID -19.

Try to get back as close to normal as possible, but continue practices of proper cleaning and good hygiene

85.2% of the people who responded feel social distancing should be 3 feet or less.

Mixed responses on contact tracing and screening prior to entering the building.

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)

The QTS In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan was created in a consistent format with bulleted lists as quick reference guides as needed.

The QTS has ensured that the Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services is accessible to all members of our school community. The plan is posted on the District Website at www.quintonschool.info. The website has a translation feature, enabling all members of our school community to access the document in their native language. Because the QTS is a 1:1 Chromebook district, the devices can be utilized not only to translate the plan, but also for text to speech accommodations.