

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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: **Golden Door Charter School**

Date: **06/18/21**

Date Revised: **12/15/21**

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

Face coverings are required to be worn by students whenever social distancing is difficult or impossible, unless it will inhibit the student's health. All staff members and visitors must wear a face covering at all times, unless it will inhibit the individual's health. The school will encourage individuals to provide/use their own personal face coverings. In the event that an individual does not have a face covering, a disposable face covering will be provided to them, free of charge. The most effective fabrics for cloth masks are tightly woven such as cotton and cotton blends, breathable and in two or three fabric layers. Masks with exhalation valves or vents, those that use loosely woven fabrics and ones that do not fit properly are not recommended. Mask Breaks will be safely provided at the teacher's discretion.

Recommendations for wearing masks correctly are as follows:

- Use hand sanitizer before putting on the mask.
- Put the mask over the nose and mouth and secure it under the chin.
- Fit the mask snugly against the sides of the face, slipping the loops over ears or tying the strings behind the head.
- If the mask needs to be continually adjusted because it does not fit properly, then a different mask type or brand is needed.
- The mask must have at least two layers and breathing can be accomplished easily.
- During peaks of the Omicron variant, staff and students are encouraged to wear masks with three layers, surgical or N95 masks if possible.

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

The school contracted with an architect to conduct a site investigation and measurement of its classroom spaces. The architect put together an assessment of the investigated classroom interior conditions and developed a plan for students/staff occupancy and section plans to properly implement the CDC, state and local guidelines for social distancing. Once all students returned in September 2021, 6-foot social distancing was not possible; however all classrooms, testing areas and therapy rooms will follow all CDC guidelines and social distancing where possible.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The school has installed hand-sanitizing stations strategically throughout the buildings. Each floor of the school building has two permanent stations with one station situated adjacent to each of the two main entrances. Gallon size hand sanitizing jugs with pump dispensers are provided for each classroom.

Frequent times for students to wash their hands or use alcohol based hand sanitizer will be provided at the teacher's discretion. While this will take place frequently throughout the school day, all students will be provided time to wash or sanitize their hand before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. The school will make sure to display signage encouraging frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

A detailed procedure manual with daily schedules will be maintained documenting increased cleaning and disinfection; targeted areas to be cleaned, including frequently touched surfaces/objects and frequent sanitation of bathrooms; and methods and materials to be used. Custodial staff will continue to conduct daily cleaning and disinfecting of all common touch areas, furniture, and other surfaces in all areas of the buildings.

✓ Classroom Cleaning:

- Wiping down all surfaces including desk shields, desks, tables, chairs, doorknobs, windows, walls, chalk/white boards, garbage/recycle containers and other areas.
- Dusting all walls, ceilings, computers, shelves, ledges, projectors, ceiling fans, and other areas.
- Sweeping and wet mopping floors.
- Wiping down windows.

✓ Bathroom Cleaning:

- Wiping down all doors, garbage containers, urinals, toilets, sinks, mirrors, dispensers, windows, walls, and partitions.
- Sweeping and wet mopping floors.
- Hallway/Stairwell Cleaning:
 - Wiping down all water fountains, walls, hand railings, doors, windows, and doorknobs.
 - Dusting all ledges, window frames, walls, ceilings, and other areas.
 - Sweeping and wet mopping floors and stairs.

- ✓ **Playground Cleaning:**
 - Once all staff/students have left the playground area for the day, the custodial staff will begin disinfecting the playground utilizing the Victory Sprayer with BruTab6S.
 - The disinfecting of all playground equipment/surface areas will continue for up to 30 minutes as needed. During that time, no staff or students will be permitted onto the playground.
 - After the custodial staff has completed this and the BruTab6s has had the required time to properly disinfect all playground equipment and surface areas it will be ready for subsequent use.
- ✓ **Daily Disinfecting:**
 - After daily cleanings have been completed, disinfectant will be sprayed on all surfaces and common touch areas using Enviro Solutions Neutral Disinfectant ES364
- ✓ **Cleaning Schedule**
 - Custodial staff will conduct cleaning and disinfecting of all hallways, stairwells, doorknobs, water fountains, and bathrooms on an hourly basis beginning at 8:00am. Classrooms will be disinfected throughout the school day when the rooms are unoccupied and time permits.
 - If a classroom will be unoccupied during the school day for more than 40 minutes, the classroom teacher is to notify the facilities supervisor who will arrange for the custodial staff to enter the classroom for cleaning and disinfecting. After school has closed for the day, the custodial staff will begin daily cleaning and disinfecting of the buildings.
- ✓ **Additional disinfection after each area of the building has been cleaned, will be as follows:**
 - **Enviro Solutions: ES364 Neutral Disinfectant**
 - This neutral disinfectant is suitable for use in schools, hospitals, medical and dental offices, nursing homes, fitness facilities, and public restrooms. It is a broad-spectrum antibacterial, virucide and fungicide. It is effective against COVID-19, Norovirus, Hepatitis B, Chlamydia psittaci, Herpes Simplex Type 1 & 2, MRSA, Influenza, and HIV-1 and a variety of other diseases or bugs.
 - ES364 has a 5-minute dwell time for disinfecting.
 - It is EPA Registered
 - **Brulin: BruTab 6S**
 - BruTab 6S has demonstrated effectiveness against viruses on hard, non-porous surfaces and can be used against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).
 - It is a bleach alternative in effervescent tablet form.
 - 6S = Strong, Surface / User friendly, Stable, Sustainable, Simple and Smells clean. Effective against a broad range of microorganisms.
 - EPA Registered applied to all areas/surfaces: Brulin BruTabs6S with Victory Sprayer.

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

The school recognizes the importance of being able to identify those who have been exposed to people who have tested positive for contagious diseases, including COVID-19. All applicable administrators, school safety specialists, nurse and/or any other staff member deemed appropriate have participated and will continue to participate in training for COVID-19 Contact Tracing. The school will communicate and monitor developments with the Jersey City Health Department if there is a known contagious disease including COVID-19 present at the school. Contact Tracing will begin after contacting the Department of Health.

The school follows the New Jersey Department of Health's Newest COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria as well as New Jersey Department of Health School Exclusion List in collaboration with Jersey City Department of Health. The school will communicate with employees and families regarding COVID-19 positive cases, exposures and guidelines for fully vaccinated individuals. The school will communicate updates to policies and procedures as per school protocol.

Isolation and Quarantine Protocol January 2022

- The school encourages the school community to notify the school and the school nurse if a student/staff is sick.
- All reported Students/Staff who tested positive for COVID 19 and all reported Close Contacts are being handled on case-by-case basis and referred to Jersey City Department of Health for guidance on Isolation, Quarantine and return to school /work.
- If a child/staff is dismissed from school with two or more signs/symptoms from the COVID checklist, the student/staff must have a Healthcare Provider's note and a negative COVID-19 test (Viral test) to return to school.

RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK REQUIREMENT AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF COVID-19

- Verify 10 days have passed since their symptoms began, or since the date of their initial positive test (use the date the test was collected) if they did not develop symptoms.
- Verify the student/staff has been fever free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) **AND** check that symptoms improved.
- Present a signed note from a medical provider which documents the student/staff is cleared to come back to school/work after completion of 10 days Isolation.

RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK REQUIREMENTS WHO EXPERIENCED COVID-19 COMPATIBLE SYMPTOMS

(No known exposures to COVID-19 for 14 days regardless of vaccination status)

- Present a signed note from a medical provider which documents an alternate diagnosis (including positive strep test or influenza swab) AND a negative COVID-19 test result
- Verify the student/staff has been fever free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) AND check that symptoms improved

F Diagnostic and screening testing

The school does not utilize any kind of diagnostic testing for COVID-19 as well as Screening testing for COVID-19. All individuals with compatible symptoms of COVID-19 at school will be referred to their Health Care Provider and required to get COVID-19 TEST (Viral test).

The school maintains digital, no-touch thermometers that will be used to screen all students, staff members when they visit the Health Office and for Visitors when they visit the school building. School teachers are trained and have the option to check the body temperatures of the students using the no-touch thermometers. The school nurse will randomly check students' temperature in the classrooms, if the schedule permits. COVID-19 Health Screening Questions are being utilized for all the students/staff who visit the Health Office and for visitors who visit the school building.

Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children, and to notify the school if their child will be absent due to sickness. Parents/ Staff are encouraged to use the Health Screening Reminder for COVID-19 symptoms every day before leaving for school.

The school nurse will also continue to monitor the immunocompromised and high-risk population as needed. Should the school nurse determine that a student/staff should be sent home, she will contact the student's parent/guardian or emergency contact and refer them to a healthcare provider. Pick up of the student must occur within one hour of contact. Persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing. The school will communicate with and will follow the Jersey City Health Department guidance for any students or staff with COVID-19 compatible symptoms, COVID-19 positive tests, or Close Contacts.

See below for additional information on PPE, Symptoms, Isolation Room, etc.:

✓ PPE:

The school maintains a supply of the following PPE items:

- Assortment of face coverings/masks and gloves
- Hand sanitizers & Sanitizing wipes
- Desk & Face shields
- No-touch thermometers
- HEPA air purifiers for classrooms, among other items.

✓ Isolation Room:

The school has designated a large classroom as a separation (isolation) room during the COVID-19 pandemic. The room is large enough to divide into private sections for isolation, if needed. A separate area of this room will be designated specifically for individuals showing symptoms of COVID-19. Students who have COVID-19 symptoms will be separated and will be encouraged to use the bathroom prior to entering the Isolation Room. Staff wearing appropriate PPE will monitor students in the Isolation Room until an authorized adult arrives to remove the student from the school.

✓ COVID-19 Related Trainings will include:

- Health and Safety Protocols from Safe School Training
- Basic Information on COVID-19
- Safe School training for all staff
- The use of PPE (including gloves, masks, face shields)
- Proper hygiene practices

✓ Students and Staff have been advised to stay home if they have:

- Tested positive for COVID-19
- COVID-19 compatible symptoms
- Potential Exposure to COVID-19 from a Close Contact encounter
- Engaged in domestic and/or international travel in the past 10 days

✓ Symptoms-based Exclusion for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms (At least two of the following symptoms):

- Fever (measure or subjective)
- Chills
- Rigors (shivers)
- Myalgia (muscle aches)
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Congestion
- Runny Nose

- ✓ At least one of the following symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - New olfactory disorder
 - New taste disorder
- ✓ Signs and symptoms of MIS-C:
 - Rash
 - Red eyes
 - Cracked/swollen lips
 - Red/swollen tongue
 - Swelling hands/feet
 - Stomach pains.
- ✓ If the school nurse or any staff member deems that the student is in distress, based on a visual check the nurse or staff member will call 911 immediately. Symptoms prompting a call to 911 include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - SPO2 <95% in a student without an underlying respiratory condition
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - Confusion or change in behavior
 - Altered level of consciousness
 - Circum-orally cyanosis or change in coloring to face and/or extremities
 - Inability to wake or stay awake

NOTE: For students with chronic illness, new symptoms or worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria

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

GDSCS was invited by the Jersey City Mayor's Office to participate in a School Vaccination Program where all interested staff members were scheduled for vaccinations. At this time, all interested staff members have been fully vaccinated. Any staff members who remain unvaccinated must comply with the Executive Order No. 253 signed by the Governor of New Jersey on August 23, 2021. The Board has adopted a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing.

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

Upon returning to school, students with disabilities will be assessed informally and formally to determine present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. IEP or 504 Plan teams will meet, as necessary, to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which remote learning took place. The IEP or 504 plan teams will determine if there is a need for compensatory services to be provided to address any learning deficits. With this in mind, Golden Door Charter School will consider any learning deficits when providing modifications and accommodations. The goal of the school is to provide students with disabilities the resources they need to succeed. For this reason, the special education teachers will provide additional accommodations and modifications as are determined appropriate.

Related services (Occupational Therapy, Speech, and Counseling) and ESL services will be provided for students. Students will be required to wear masks in therapy and counseling rooms if social distancing cannot take place. Therapy and counseling rooms will be sanitized before each session.

Students with disabilities will be required to wear masks when social distancing cannot take place. Parents will be required to provide documentation if a student is unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition. Special education teachers will provide instruction on the use of PPE, as well as model the use of PPE and social distancing. The following will be considered if students have sensory needs:

- Tape on floor around the desk/area in which they aren't required to wear a mask, but must wear a mask if they leave that area
- Incentives for students wearing mask correctly/certain amount of time
- For older students, post reminders/posters for how to correctly wear masks and wash hands properly
- When creating new IEPs, add goals for PPE (if necessary)

CST evaluations will take place on-site, and both the students and evaluators are expected to wear masks when social distancing cannot take place. Any manipulatives used during the evaluations will be sanitized before and after use. The CST will research virtual evaluation options if students and/or evaluators are uncomfortable completing the evaluation on-site.

It is important parents are provided communication on a regular basis throughout this pandemic. Before students return to school, the school will provide parents of students with disabilities the appropriate PPE and social distancing expectations. This will allow the students to prepare and become comfortable with returning to school.

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)
- **Addressing the Loss of Learning** -Teachers will have the necessary data from diagnostic testing and from the previous teacher's feedback to determine the content and skills that need remediation and additional time. The content and skills will be embedded into the current grade-level curriculum. Continued testing will be done throughout the year to continue to determine the skills and standards that need remediation.
 - **Accelerated Learning** – In order to address and support the learning gaps while still providing students with grade-level material, the use of pre-assessments will be a very important tool. Once the learning gaps are determined teachers can then use this information to guide their lesson planning. These identified skills are important in order to access the current grade level material so teachers will make the decision to provide either some pre-teaching before the current topic is introduced or the skills can be embedded into the current content.
 - **Modifying Pacing Guides** - During the summer, pacing guides were adjusted to include a time for teachers and students to address the loss of learning. The pacing guides will be created for the year however; they will be modified as the need arises. Pacing guides will need to be adjusted as we proceed through the year to allow the pre and formative assessments to drive instruction and pacing. The modifying of pacing guides will be done during team meetings.
 - **Professional development (PD)** - PD opportunities for curriculum implementation have been identified through student performance data on state and benchmark assessments (i.e. problem solving in math). Teacher training is also driven by changing demographics such as rise in ESL students and need to implement SIOP strategies in regular education classrooms in addition to pullout replacement. School culture has also informed professional learning decision-making for SEL such as Growth Mindset and providing teachers with clarity in the roles of Special Education teachers and various co-teaching models. Lastly, new staff receive PD tailored to their needs by participating in introductory training for our curriculum programs as well as 1:1 sessions with our content coaches.
 - **Social and Emotional Component** - The Covid-19 pandemic has been a source of trauma for students and adults alike. Because of this, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) will be a priority. Teachers and staff will be addressing the students' emotional well-being. This guidance and instruction will be embedded in every part of the day during instruction. The Danielson Framework for Teaching is a comprehensive framework that identifies research-based components of instruction. We will be using the four domains in the model, along with the components of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a guide.

- **Student Health** – Staff will be encouraged to look out for students’ symptoms throughout the school day to identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure. Students will also be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms throughout the day. Any student who develops symptoms should notify their teacher and see the School Nurse immediately. Students will be encouraged to follow routine hand hygiene including handwashing and sanitation breaks during and between classroom activities.
- **Food Service** - Meal service is provided by our food service management company that is Maschio’s Food Services. Maschio’s prepares meals onsite on a daily basis and offers a variety of choices for breakfast and lunch with all health and safety standards being followed (i.e. masks, gloves, etc.) Meals consist of fruits, vegetables, milk, grain and protein with a Maschio’s employee keeping track of meals served. Due to COVID, the State has allowed all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to offer free lunch to all enrolled students with schools reimbursed accordingly.

Grades PK through 1 will have lunches delivered to their classrooms and students will eat at their desks behind their desk shields. We anticipate having the most children that will utilize free lunch from grades 2 through 5 so we believe that it would make the most sense to have those grades utilize the cafeteria one period at a time for four consecutive lunch periods. Each grade has approximately 72 students or three classes of 24. While we typically would have 160 children in a cafeteria during one lunch period, we decided to limit that to 50% of capacity (or 80 students max) which would be one grade per period. Utilizing the cafeteria for the younger grades will also aid in the cleanliness of the classrooms and would cause less disruption. As an added layer of precaution, we have added clear plexiglass dividers/shields at each cafeteria table to allow for only four students per table and adequate separation.

Grades 6-8, which has been determined will most likely have the fewest students eating, could pick up their lunch for the students who would like to eat. One student or a teacher can pick up a bag for their class. With all of the students eating for free, this would be easier as we just need the number of kids, not the names of who is having lunch.

Custodial staff are stationed in the cafeteria during each of the lunch periods to handle garbage disposal and clean/sanitize the tables and floors accordingly between classes.

- **ESSER fund allocations** – The school’s plan is to use a large percentage of the funds to replace the existing HVAC system so we can significantly enhance the ventilation in the building(s). We would also like to use most of the remaining funds to address learning loss.
- **Remote/Virtual Learning** – In the event of another shutdown, an Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Policy (along with a Plan) has been created for use as needed. Remote learning is also available for those students who are required to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19.

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)

In an effort to involve all stakeholders, meeting(s) were setup to obtain input and feedback from representatives of the following groups:

- Administration
 - Teachers & Support Staff
 - Board Members
 - Parents
- Our School previously sent the Safe Return Plan to all stakeholders and invited them to participate in a Zoom meeting prior to the start of the school year. During the session, School Personnel provided a brief overview of the plan including the proposed use of ESSER III funds. Following the overview, we asked participants for their input on any aspects of the plan in the form of public comments or questions. A summary of the Q&A was placed on the School's website for interested stakeholders to view later. Plan updates will continue to be shared with parents in some capacity to ensure the appropriate input and/or comments.
- Most of the comments/questions from stakeholders were as follows:
- Masks
 - Food service
 - Parents having the option for remote learning
 - Quarantine-related questions
- The School discussed where those items stand as of today and informed stakeholders that this may all change once we receive updated guidance from the NJDOE, NJDOH and CDC in the ensuing months. The common theme was that parents prefer a choice on mask-wearing come fall. We informed them that we have to wait on further guidance from the State; however, if given the option we would consider their input and incorporate it into the plan as needed.
- Subsequent discussion(s) and soliciting of public comment will occur at the month's regularly scheduled Board meeting.

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 plan will be uploaded onto the school's website at www.goldendoorschool.org and available to view in various languages for those individuals with limited English proficiency. This plan will continue to be updated periodically in accordance with federal guidelines.