



## 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.

**RED = November 2021 Additions** **GREEN = January 19, 2022 Additions** **PURPLE = March 17, 2022 Additions** **ORANGE = April 30, 2022 Additions** **Pink = June 30, 2022 Additions**  
**Blue = September 15, 2022 updates, Bright Green=11/17/2022 updates, Dark Yellow (tan) = 10/17/2023 updates.**

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: Greater Brunswick Charter School

Date (06/14/2021)

Date Revised (10/17/2023):

### 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 Greater Brunswick Charter School will [have optional](#) mask wearing inside our school and on buses, [except in the Nurse's office, when requested, and spaces which do not allow for physical distancing, when requested](#). However, [if Covid cases begin to rise at GBCS and/or our regional CALI rating increases to High or above, masking for all students and staff may be required to prevent additional spread of cases.](#) .

Greater Brunswick Charter School [Students](#) will [have the option](#) to wear their mask:

- On the bus to and from school
- Entering and leaving the school
- In the classroom
- During any physical movement
- Considerations will be made per grade level for instructional purposes.
- Face covering breaks will be provided during breakfast, lunch, and outdoor activities.
- Considerations will be made when needed in accordance with: IEP, 504, IHP (Individual Health Plan)

Currently the CDC does not recommend use of face shields as a substitute for face coverings.

Greater Brunswick Charter School [Staff](#) will have the option to wear Face Masks as follows:

- Entering and exiting Greater Brunswick Charter School facilities
- Within the classroom or office
- During times of transition in the hallways
- Whenever social distancing cannot be maintained

Exceptions to requirements for face coverings may include, but are not limited to:

- Doing so would inhibit the staff member's health
- Extreme heat outdoors
- Staff seated and eating in designated areas
- Staff member has a documented medical condition that prevents the wearing of a mask

Greater Brunswick Charter School gives the option to all Visitors to Wear a Mask or not. However, if Covid cases begin to rise at GBCS and/or our regional CALL rating increases to High or above, masking for all visitors may be required to prevent additional spread of cases. During such times:

- If a visitor refuses to wear a face covering, the visitor's entry to the school/district facility will be denied.
- Greater Brunswick Charter School will have protocols and procedures in place to accommodate individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to documented medical conditions. Accommodations may include virtual options or other non-admittance protocols. Documentation will be required or Face Masks MUST be worn.

Exceptions:

- Visitors under the age of 2 are not required to wear a facemask.

CDC Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

OCH Department Information: <https://www.ochd.org/how-to-protect-yourself-others/>

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

- Greater Brunswick Charter School will provide for social distancing within the school to the maximum extent practicable **when appropriate and required to do so by an Executive Order from the Governor**. The school footprint can accommodate all students with a physical distance of 3 feet; therefore, cohort groupings are not needed.
- School administrators will monitor the physical layouts of each classroom to ensure proper social distancing.

## C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

### Handwashing etiquette:

- District administrators in conjunction with the Custodial Department will continue to support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies at the District's expense, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 % alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and face coverings (as feasible).
- Supplies are located in each classroom, at entrances/exits of the building, and throughout the building.
- Kindergarten children ages five and younger are supervised when using hand sanitizer. If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Handwashing signs will continue to be placed in all restrooms reminding users of proper handwashing techniques.
- Handwashing signs will also continue to be placed in and around all designated eating areas reminding staff/ students to wash their hands before and after eating.
- Designated times to wash hands:
  - Before and after eating snacks particularly if hands are sticky, greasy or soiled
  - After bathroom use or helping a student use the toilet
  - After sneezing, wiping, & blowing noses

### Respiratory etiquette:

**Masking is optional, however, if Covid cases begin to rise at GBCS and/or our regional CALI rating increases to High or above, masking for all visitors may be required to prevent additional spread of cases. During such times:**

- Staff are expected to wear a face covering daily. Greater Brunswick Charter School will maintain a supply of disposable face coverings in order to provide for a staff member or student that does not have their own.

- Greater Brunswick Charter School will continue to maintain a supply of disposable gloves and individual hand sanitizer to provide for a staff member who requests such supplies.

Greater Brunswick Charter School will continue to follow CDC Guidance for Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette:

Hand Hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19/handwashing.html>

Respiratory Etiquette: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>

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

- The school custodians will continue to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) will be limited when possible **during periods when Covid cases rise**.
- School bus drivers will continue to practice all cleaning and safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings).
- The Head Custodian will implement a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection **during periods when Covid cases rise**. This schedule will be communicated to the Education Director/principal.
- The Head Custodian will ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children, and will ensure the use of products that meet EPA disinfection criteria.
- Cleaning products will not be used near children, and staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- On a regular basis, all HVAC filters will continue to be changed by the District's HVAC Maintenance vendor. The District's Head Custodian will check the Building Management System (BMS) on a daily basis to ensure the functionality of all systems. Custodial staff will also pay close attention to damper functionality. Teaching staff will be allowed to open windows whenever weather permits as well.
- Air purifiers are available in confined classroom spaces.
- Water bottle fillers will be used throughout the facility for contactless hydration stations.

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

The Greater Brunswick Charter School District Planning Team, in accordance with guidance from the CDC, NJDOH, and OCHD **are able** to implement procedures and protocols to assist the local DOH with Contact Tracing when needed. **In the autumn of 2022 and 2023, this is not a required practice.**

These protocols and procedures **may** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Identified criteria to activate Contact Tracing
- Designate Staff to carry out Contact Tracing

- Adherence to all HIPAA and FERPA Laws and Regulations
- Requirement for School Nurse, School Safety Specialist, and other designated staff to be determined to complete the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Contact Tracing course or refresher course on contact tracing.
- Communication procedures, protocols, templates for notification to OCHD, Staff, Families, Community.
- Communication procedures and protocols for Self-Reporting by Students, Families, Staff.
- Adherence to COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix in regards to isolation and quarantine.

Procedures for caring for students and staff who have the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Providing masks for the affected to wear.
- Affected will be quarantined in a room separate from the population of the school. (Conference Room or Garden of Wellness Room)
- The students and staff members will be discharged via the main entrance to minimize exposure to the rest of school.
- Documentation will be kept to monitor the discharge of students/staff dismissed with suspected COVID-19.
- Reports will be submitted to the Middlesex County Health Office.
- Quarantine room will be properly disinfected after a suspected case has been identified.

#### **F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

The Greater Brunswick Charter School, in accordance with guidance from the NJDOE, NJDOH, and OCHD will continue to use screening procedures for students and staff at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure.

These screening procedures will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **During periods when Covid cases rise** parents and staff may receive a weekly or monthly [reminder checklist](#) which includes a daily [COVID checklist](#) for each child/staff prior to their arrival at school to confirm that they are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Document results when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed
- Adhere to HIPAA/FERPA Laws
- Screening policies must take into account students with disabilities & accommodations that may be required in the screening process.
- **During periods when Covid cases rise** [Covid-19 PCR testing](#) may be given weekly to all staff to help gauge the spread and impact of the virus during times of Very High community infection rates, minimally. This practice will be periodically reassessed by the School Nurse, School Safety Specialist, and other designated staff to determine if/when to transition to less frequent testing, random testing for a smaller sample size, or to discontinue testing.
- **During periods when Covid cases rise** school staff and students will be encouraged to test for Covid19 often, especially after returning to school from extended breaks. When possible, testing will be provided by GBCS and/or a [list of ways to access testing](#).

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

In the past the Greater Brunswick Charter School District partnered with a teacher volunteer and Eric B. Chandler Health Center to provide vaccinations to all educational staff. The Greater Brunswick Charter School District has shared local opportunities for vaccines in the community and partnered with the RWJBarnabas Health to offer eligible students, staff, and families the opportunity to receive the vaccine at GBCS in August (1st dose) and September (2nd dose). Vaccination information is communicated to school staff and families via Catapult Connect. A flu vaccine clinic was held at GBCS on November 22, 2021 and November 17, 2022. A Covid 19 Vaccine Clinic for children ages 5 - 11 was held on December 6, 2021, January 4, and January 25, February 22, and March 22, 2022. Covid-19 vaccines were available during a Health Fair at GBCS on May 24, August 9, 2022, November 17, 2022, and during the 2023-2024 school year.

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

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities, in regards to their health and safety, will be made in accordance with their IEP, 504 plan, and/or medical orders which may include, but is not limited to, scheduling options and delivery of services options in compliance with all NJDOE regulations.

## 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)

- Greater Brunswick Charter School has a variety of summer programs available to all student groups in Grades K-8 to provide for continuity of services academically, socially, and emotionally. Additional programs have been embedded within the school day and/or offered in an [extended day format](#).
- Utilizing ESSER funds, Greater Brunswick Charter School teaching staff was trained in January 2022 in Routes to Resilience - Social Emotional Learning Curriculum and grief and trauma informed practices to support students in classrooms through the Good Grief Schools organization. Parent training was provided for trauma-informed parenting practices in the home.
- Greater Brunswick Charter School teaching staff was trained in Social Emotional Character Development (3 hours) with the New Jersey State Bar Foundation in August 2021. In January 2022 Special Area teachers and a representative from each grade group were trained by Good Grief in Routes of Resilience, 5 weeks of SEL Curriculum to be implemented in Health classes. All staff had Mind Health training and coaching on March 7, 2022 and monthly follow up sessions through June 2024. We facilitated mindfulness daily prompts during Summer Academy 2022. The entire teaching staff was trained in Trauma Sensitive Schools by the NJ State Bar Foundation on August 31, 2022. In September 2022 we launched school wide meditation, a dedicated space, and staff members to guide students with mind health and wellness.
- School counselors, Child Study Team members, administrators, and the school nurse will continue to meet regularly to support student needs and develop related action plans where applicable.
- Care Solace services are available to students, parents/guardians, staff members and their families. Care Solace links people in need of social, emotional, and behavioral help with service providers. Parent/guardian workshops for Care Solace are provided annually.

- Utilizing ESSER funds and other Title funds, in addition to District funds, Professional Development to address Growth Mindset, Equity and Access, Trauma Informed Care, and Cultural Responsiveness are provided to staff and implemented with students, parents, and community via best practices.

### 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)**

The Greater Brunswick Charter School District sought public comment as follows:

- Shared school community survey results June, 2021 to receive feedback in targeted areas.
- Placement of the safe reopening plan on the June, August, and November 2021, and January, March, May, July, September, November 2022 and November 2023 Board of Trustees Agendas.
- Revised plans will appear on subsequent Board of Education Agendas for public comment should revisions need to be made as required.

**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)**

- All information is posted to the Greater Brunswick Charter School District Website under the *Reopening of School* tab. This “quick tab” is prominently placed on the District homepage for easy access.
- The Greater Brunswick Charter School Executive Director provides messages via the District communication software, website, and during her report of the Executive Director at regular Board of Trustee meetings.
- All written communications are provided for parents in English and Spanish; district staff provide oral translations where needed. Catapult Connect notifications (text messages, emails) and voice messages are also used to support understanding and help to ensure receipt of communication. Special accessibility accommodations will be made in alternative formats for parents with a disability upon request as defined by the ADA.