

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

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

This plan describes how Pace Charter School of Hamilton will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Deborah Pontoriero, Superintendent of Pace Charter School of Hamilton at 609-599-1212. To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pace Charter School of Hamilton followed CDC, NJDoH, Governors' Executive Orders and local Health Department guidance.

An updated Reopening of Schools Instructional Plan and updated Schools Health Plan can be found on the Pace Charter School of Hamilton home page <http://pacecharter.com>

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

LEA Name: Deborah A Pontoriero

Date (07/30/2020):

Date Revised (6/15/2021)

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 or Governors' Executive Orders.

Universal and correct wearing of masks - Pace Charter School of Hamilton will require that students and staff wear a cloth face-covering/mask as recommended by the CDC guidelines:

- A cloth face-covering needs to be worn at all times when at least six-foot physical distance cannot be maintained; however if 6 feet of distance is not feasible, a combination of face coverings and a minimum of three feet should be maintained between everyone present. (masks as medically and developmentally appropriate)
- CDC adaptations and alternatives should be considered when possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading if it is not possible to wear one.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed daily.
- Masks are to cover mouth and nose.
- Students/staff are encouraged to avoid touching one's face while wearing cloth covering.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to send their child with a mask and an extra mask daily.
- School health offices will have on hand extra masks for students/staff as needed

Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding) - Pace Charter School of Hamilton will ensure students are seated at least 3-6 feet apart and that all desks are turned to face the same direction (rather than facing each other).

- Social distancing is required in each of our buildings and on school buses. The use of communal spaces has been restricted and previously unused areas of the building have been opened to allow for more social distancing. Outside areas have been utilized for instruction (weather permitting), and seating charts utilized on school buses to provide adequate social distancing.
- Students initially transitioned back to school on an A day/B day hybrid schedule so social distancing of six feet could be maintained in all areas of the buildings and fewer students allowed in the buildings. Student groupings within classrooms for pullout instruction are encouraged.
- Floor tape and stickers are utilized to help younger students identify proper distancing protocol

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette - The following preventive health strategies for staff and students are emphasized:

Students and staff to wash hands at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing, after recess and physical education. After each class or lunch period, all furniture will be sanitized.

Encourage individuals to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, place the used tissue in the opened-top wastebasket, and then wash their hands. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cover-your-cough_poster.pdf

If tissues are unavailable, encourage individuals to cough or sneeze into the upper sleeve or elbow, not onto their hands. Then they should wash their hands. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/resources/posters.html>

Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol content and rub until the contents are dry (hand sanitizing stations located throughout the school and available in all classrooms). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html><https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>

Encourage individuals to avoid touching their faces with their hands as much as possible. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

If a student is participating in Speech and Language Services: Students will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before entering the therapy space/room. Students will sit across the table from the therapist. Students will be required to wear a clear face shield. Each student will be given a face shield with his/her name on it. The face shield shall be stored in the therapy room.

The therapist shall sanitize each face shield before being stored after each session. Each therapist will either wear a mask with a clear cover or a face shield so the students can see the therapist's mouth for instructional purposes. Staff will limit the use of supplies and equipment to one group of students at a time and disinfect between uses. The therapist is required to sanitize all supplies, materials, and furniture (desks, chairs, tables) before the next group of students enters the room.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation - Pace Charter School of Hamilton will ensure that each room in the school has adequate ventilation, and will keep windows open to afford fresh air

Pace Charter School of Hamilton custodial staff and all designated staff follow CDC guidelines for cleaning at all school sites and school facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

The custodial and all designated staff will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces/areas within the school setting using EPA-approved disinfectants. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19All>

School staff will follow manufacturer's guidelines for correct application and use EPA approved disinfectants. Products will be stored properly and kept out of reach and away from children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Routine cleaning and disinfecting will be maintained daily and as needed to provide a safe and healthy environment for faculty, students and staff.

The Custodial staff and other designated staff will wear PPE in accordance with the OSHA/Bloodborne Pathogens Plan when sanitizing and disinfecting. The custodial staff and other designated staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and areas within the school setting using EPA-approved disinfectants. The custodial staff and all designated staff will follow CDC guidelines for cleaning at all school sites and school facilities. The custodial staff and other designated staff will intensify cleaning during the COVID-19 pandemic.(Designated Cleaning Days) The custodial staff will clean frequently throughout the school day disinfecting the following surfaces/items listed below per CDC guidelines.

- Doorknobs and handles
- Desktops
- Sink/faucet handles
- Restroom knobs/doors
- Water refill stations/water fountains (when in use)
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops that students frequently come into contact with
- Handrails
- Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
- Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators
- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared desktops
- Shared computer keyboards and mice-shared computers should have signage posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, covers may be used to protect the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high touch or high risk (e.g. floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets).

Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or cleaner appropriate for the material.

The custodial staff will reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for staff and students by cleaning and disinfecting by following the reopening guidance from the CDC for cleaning and disinfection of schools, by following the opening guidance from the CDC for cleaning and disinfection schools, a cleaning and disinfection decision tree, and an infographic on cleaning your facility when someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

All custodial staff will participate in the annual Blood Borne Pathogen training, COVID-19, and environmental cleaning. They will participate in professional development such as anaphylaxis, diabetes, epinephrine, asthma, and seizures, etc., and proper cleaning in the school setting. Training will be conducted by the school nurses and training videos will be available for custodial staff using CDC information.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments- Pace Charter School of Hamilton will adhere to the following: if a student or any staff member is suspected or has been identified as COVID-19 positive they are to report this information to school administrators or the school nurse immediately.

The Superintendent will be notified by the school nurse at each school site if they have a reported or suspected positive COVID-19 case.

The School Nurse will report this information (COVID-19 suspected or confirmed) to the local health department. They will work in conjunction with the Department of Health to perform contact tracing and to identify anyone that may need to self-isolate or be tested. Based on local health department recommendations, students/staff may be quarantined.

If the school system is recommended to close for a period of time, faculty/staff, students, and parents/guardians will be notified by the Superintendent. Information may be shared via division website, email, school messenger, phone call, and social media websites. School closures may also be broadcasted on radio and television. These methods will also be used to communicate new policies, orientation information, and training. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>

The School Nurse in consultation with the building principal shall establish measures for a system of open communication that allows staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure. Employees or students who have reported testing positive for COVID-19 may return to work only when they have met ALL of the following criteria:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or tested positive
- They have been fever free for 24 hours prior to return without the use of a fever reducing medication
- Symptoms have improved

The definition of exposure is the same for every setting and every type of classroom. When assessing a person's risk of exposure to COVID-19, close contact means being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 while not wearing adequate personal protective equipment for longer than 15 minutes. If someone is within 6 feet of a person with lab-confirmed COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, that person is considered to have been exposed.

Areas of the school where ill individuals spent time while infectious may need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfections while unaffected areas will continue to function as usual.

Decisions regarding the closure of a section of the school or the entire school will depend on the number of ill persons who have been sent home for a period of isolation and the number of exposed contacts who have been identified and placed into quarantine.

The extent of the school facility and teaching staff affected by these factors will be a component in determining whether education services can continue to be provided.

Diagnostic and screening testing - Pace Charter School of Hamilton follows the recommendations and best practices guidelines from the CDC, NJ DoH and Governors' Executive Orders as they relate to diagnostic and screening tests for COVID-19.

Pace Charter School of Hamilton works with the local health department, doctor's offices and pharmacies to test students and staff.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff and students, if eligible. Pace Charter School of Hamilton has provided information to the school communities via the school website, flyers sent home and school Facebook page. Approximately 90% of staff have been fully vaccinated.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies -

All students currently being serviced through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan will continue to receive accommodations and instruction as prescribed in their plan. Should health mitigation challenges interfere with our ability to provide these services as required, Pace Charter School of Hamilton will request and convene an IEP or 504 team meeting to discuss resolutions that would ensure the needs of our students are still being met. Parents may also request an IEP or 504 meeting at any time.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

Pace Charter School of Hamilton has taken and will continue to take actions to 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.

Pace Charter School of Hamilton has identified areas to be addressed in the reopening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year. Identification of instructional gaps and student needs, and remote learning plans for future instruction will be implemented.

Communication - Opportunities for conversations with stakeholders regarding plans and monitoring implementation are essential. Pace Charter School of Hamilton utilizes information from surveys to develop and refine plans within each scenario. Frequent and consistent communication from the schools will be utilized to maintain transparency. Communication methods will include School Messenger (a robo call) email, phone calls, mailings, and text messaging.

Instruction for ALL Students - Our commitment is to ensure that all Pace Charter School of Hamilton students have access to equitable educational opportunities. Pace Charter School of Hamilton maintains a focus on equity as the center of our work as we serve all students. Vulnerable and special populations will be considered to ensure appropriate instruction while complying with state and federal requirements.

Services for special populations such as students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged, and gifted learners, will be considered based on specific student needs.

Plan for school schedules - For the 2021-2022 school year, Pace Charter School of Hamilton plans to offer in-person instruction five days a week and school schedules will not be shortened.

Transportation - School buses will enact new capacity limits and seating guidelines, per health and safety expectations issued by the Department of Health. Buses will be cleaned and sanitized between uses in accordance with guidelines. Masks will be provided and required during bus routes.

Technology - Pace Charter School of Hamilton students will be issued devices to be used according to the current grade level. Whether learning takes place primarily in an online environment or face-to-face, digital resources and platforms including Virtual and Google Classroom will ensure students have access to high-quality learning tools.

Identification of Instructional Gaps and Student Needs - Pace Charter School of Hamilton will use a variety of formative assessments including NWEA early benchmarks, running records, DRA, teacher-created assessments to measure learning gaps and needs.

Professional development will be provided to address instructional needs. Remediation will be provided using small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, and online interventions. Social-emotional learning is critical to

re-engage students, rebuild relationships and school communities and create equitable learning environments for all students. Training will be provided for all instructional staff in the area of mental health and well-being. School counselors will have dedicated time to provide social-emotional learning support.

Guidance Counselors and School Nurse will continually monitor school community mental health and offer expanded access. When needed, Pace will assess available resources (personnel, existing partners) to determine if there is a need for external support. Formal and informal strategies may include morning meetings, advisory periods, strategies, counseling sessions. Using data from both formative assessments and social-emotional assessments, teachers will revise curricula/pacing to address missing content as a result of extended school closures. Special consideration will be given to missing content from the previous year, identification of content connections between grade levels, and student progression toward learning goals. Vertical planning within schools will allow teams to identify and ensure missing content is presented to students in a variety of formats.

Teachers will use the current curriculum maps for consistent guidelines while revising the delivery format in order to accommodate the current educational structure.

Food Service: Pace Charter School of Hamilton will continue to follow the guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture, USDA for the Child Nutrition Lunch Program.

Pace Charter School of Hamilton and Karson Food (food vendor), have secured a single designated spot (i.e., outside of school's main entrance) for the meals to be dropped off at and picked up by the student or a family member.

Breakfast and Lunch are a grab and go packed separately, as one component with milk.

Interested families can pick up breakfast and lunch from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM each Wednesday. Grab and Go pickup of meals will allow families to pick up for the week to eliminate the need to come to the school daily. Students attending school will be given grab and go breakfast and lunch daily to eat at home.

3. Public Comment

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).

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Pace Charter School of Hamilton sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

In May 2021, Pace Charter School of Hamilton sought input from all staff through the use of a survey that asked specific questions regarding federal funds.

On May 18, 2021, Pace Charter School of Hamilton conducted a parent involvement meeting to discuss the ARP ESSER Plan.

On June 15, 2021, Pace Charter School of Hamilton sought additional input from the community by providing a public comment opportunity specifically for the ARP ESSER Plan during the general meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Periodic Review and Revision of Plan - During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Pace Charter School of Hamilton will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.

- The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and Pace Charter School of Hamilton will seek and take into account public input during the review process.

- Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance and Governors' Executive Orders on safely reopening schools if any are of issue.
- The COVID Response Team included staff, parents and board members in the development of the plan. The plan was posted on the school's website and public comment was invited.

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).

Pace Charter School of Hamilton has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

The plan is posted at <http://pacecharter.com>

- The plan is available in English, Spanish, and Polish languages.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents in Spanish and individuals can contact Mrs. Ordonez, Administrative Assistant (609-599-1212) to request translation.
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Mrs. Bond, Director of Special Education. (609-599-1212)