

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

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each local educational agency (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 Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. In New Mexico, districts and state-chartered charter schools are LEAs.

This is a federal requirement and is not the same as the past state requirement for LEAs to submit Reentry Plans.

Pursuant to ARP requirements, LEAs must post on their website a fully compliant Plan for Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services by **December 24, 2021**.

This is the template we are providing for you to complete the ARP ESSER Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. The template incorporates the federally-required components of this plan.

This template incorporates the federally-required components of the LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services.

PED hopes this template will allow LEAs to efficiently and effectively plan and to easily post their LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services on their websites as required by the ARP Act.

The LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its Plan for Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services through September 30, 2023

Date of Revision	
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District ID	County	LEA NAME
036	Lincoln	Ruidoso Municipal Schools

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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

CDC Safety Recommendations	Has the LEA Adopted a Policy? (Y/N)	Describe LEA Policy:
Universal and correct wearing of masks	Y	Ruidoso Municipal Schools follows guidelines issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department. Face masks are to be worn to cover

		<p>the mouth and nose and fit snugly against the sides of the face in order to contain respiratory droplets. Everyone is required to wear masks while in school building, on school transportation, or at a school sponsored event. The only time the face mask may be off is while eating and drinking during allowed times. The original NMPED Toolkit allowed for vaccinated secondary students to be mask-free; however, the Ruidoso Board of Education voted to make masks mandatory for all students.</p>
Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)	Y	<p>Ruidoso Municipal Schools follows guidelines issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department. For all in-person services, teachers create and maintain seating charts to ensure social distancing requirements are maintained and that limit the number of student interactions. Unvaccinated adults are to maintain 6 feet of social distance to the extent possible from other adults and from students. Unvaccinated students are to maintain 3 feet of social distance to the extent possible, except when eating, exercising, taking mask breaks, playing wind instruments, and singing or shouting, in which case 6 feet of social distance to the extent possible is required. Elementary students grades Pre-K through 5th grade are in classroom pods at recess and other special pull outs.</p>
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Y	<p>Staff and students are provided instructions on handwashing protocols to mitigate transmission of COVID 19. Signage for handwashing instructions posted in staff and student bathrooms.</p>
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	Y	<p>MERV 13 filters installed in HVAC to increase air flow, windows opened (as appropriate) and deployment of portable fans as appropriate. XENEX UV LightStrike are employed a minimum of twice per week in each room on each campus to mitigate the spread of virus. The District has a total of 8 robots, 2 per school.</p>
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local,	Y	<p>Per the New Mexico Public Education Toolkit, the District assembles its Rapid Response Team upon notification of each positive case to implement the contract tracing protocol. Close contacts are</p>

territorial, or Tribal health departments		then notified via phone and letter with more detailed information regarding any quarantining and/or testing requirements. All positive cases are reported to the NMPED and any positive employee cases are additionally reported to the New Mexico Environmental Department. All non-close contacts are also informed of a positive case within their school site.
Diagnostic and screening testing	Y	Per the New Mexico Public Education Department Toolkit, COVID 19 surveillance testing is required weekly of all unvaccinated employees. To support this requirement, the District has contacted with a testing company to provide on-site testing. COVID 19 surveillance testing for vaccinated staff and all students remains completely voluntary, but is available upon request. Students participating in athletics and other extra-curricular activities are strongly encouraged to participate in surveillance testing.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities	Y	Ruidoso Municipal Schools has partnered with the local hospital, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and physicians to facilitate vaccination events and provide information regarding vaccines.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	Y	Per the New Mexico Public Education Toolkit, the following reasonable accommodations for students and staff who have a disability that precludes mask-wearing are permitted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to fully remote or fully outdoor learning as the accommodation that keeps the maximum number of people safe; 2. For students who have a breathing obstruction or other severe medical condition that would be exacerbated by mask-wearing, the IEP or 504 Plan team may consider whether to allow the student to wear a face shield after taking into account whether PPE and other additional precautionary measures could be used to keep everyone in the school community safe. In extreme cases when a face mask or a face shield cannot be safely worn by a student with an IEP or 504 Plan, the IEP team or 504 committee shall convene to

		review medical documentation and consider whether individualized accommodations would allow the student to receive in person instruction in such a way that staff and other students are kept safe.
Coordination with State and local health officials	Y	Per the New Mexico Public Education Toolkit, each school must identify a COVID 19 Point Person (Dr. Bickert, Superintendent, and Dr. Keller) to liaise with the New Mexico Public Education Department Rapid Response Team. The point person is responsible for effectively communicating with NMPED and other state officials conducting case investigations; provide up to date contact information for each student at the school; identify close contacts of confirmed cases; and ensure close contacts do not return to school until the appropriate isolation or quarantine period has passed. RMSD also works with the New Mexico Department of Health as applicable regarding COVID 19.

How the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services	
How the LEA will Ensure Continuity of Services?	
First and foremost, RMSD follows all requirements and guidelines issued by the Executive, Department of Health, and Public Education Department to assure that the District remains as open as possible for in-person instruction. Each school site supports students who are quarantining or absent due to Covid-19. RMSD has a plan in place should a school site or the entire District need to shut down for a limited, or longer time frame. This plan includes assuring that each student has his/her own device, as well as Wifi hotspot availability. Further, in the event of a forced-closure, the District, as previously (2020-21), is capable of providing pick-up and delivery of meals to those in need. Finally, the District also provides School Counselors and/or Social Workers who routinely make home visits to support our students and their families.	
How will the LEA address Students':	
Academic Needs?	RMSD continually monitors the academic progress of each student and provides a Multi-Level System of Supports to address academic needs.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs?	Each school site has a school counselor and social worker on site to provide assistance for students and staff regarding social and emotional needs as well as mental health support. School social workers provide support for RMSD families. Ruidoso High School has a School Based Health Center providing services to RMSD staff and students as applicable.
Other Needs (which may include student health and food services)?	RMSD Food Services provides meals for students when in remote learning. Food 4 Kids provides weekly backpacks of food for students participating in the program.
How will the LEA address Staff:	
Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs?	In accordance with NM HB-2, the District provides 10 days of Covid leave. Additionally, the District does not have any qualifiers on employees using their leave.
Other Needs?	The District is working on several financial incentives to support staff which may include: retention stipends , and student loan reimbursements/payments.

Public Input	
Describe the process used to seek public input, and how that input was taken into account in the revision of the plan.	The District included involved parents in the original re-opening Task Force work. Further, each school site has a dedicated Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) that contributes into site-based decision making. Finally, the District has a demographically-represented Equity Council, whose role is to make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding equity needs of the District.
Understandable and Uniform Format	
Describe the process by which the LEA will, to the extent practicable, present the plan written in a language that parents can understand. Or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, describe the process for orally translating the plan for such parents.	RMSD Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction will be posted on the district website and social media site in English and Spanish to ensure RMSD parents/guardians can access the plan. The Superintendent and site Principals have open-door policies for parents. The District provides all District communication in English and Spanish.
Describe the process by which a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided a version of the plan in an alternative format accessible to that parent.	RMSD will provide a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA a version of the plan in an alternative format accessible to the parent as applicable.

U.S. Department of Education Interim Final Rule (IFR)

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

An LEA must describe in its plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services –

1. How it 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.
 - (B) Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding).
 - (C) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
 - (D) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.
 - (E) Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.
 - (F) Diagnostic and screening testing.
 - (G) Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.
 - (H) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.
 - (I) Coordination with State and local health officials.
2. How it will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.
3. During the period of the ARP ESSER award established in section 2001(a) of the ARP Act, an LEA must
 - a. regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.
 - b. In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account.
 - c. If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any such policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations.
4. If an LEA developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i)(1) and (2) of the ARP Act but does not address all the requirements in paragraph (a), the LEA must, pursuant to paragraph (b), revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds to meet the requirements in paragraph (a).
5. An LEA's plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services must be—
 - a. In an understandable and uniform format;

- b. To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and
- c. Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

The IFR and ARP statute, along with other helpful resources, are located here:

April 2021 IFR: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf>

ARP Act text: <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf>

ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume I: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf>

ED COVID-19 Handbook Volume II: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>

ESEA Evidence-Based Guidance: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf>

ED FAQs for ESSER and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER):

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf