

Burch Charter School of Excellence



**Safe School Reopening Plan
SY 2021-2022
Updated: June 14, 2021**

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Public Input Dates: June 7- 9, 2021

Subject to Change



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.

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

LEA Name: Burch Charter School of Excellence

Date: (06/14/2021)

Date Revised: Initial Version

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

School staff, students and visitors are required to wear face coverings in the absence of a mask for students, staff or visitors - masks will be provided. BCSE received over 1,300 masks from the state in SY 2020-2021 for students this year in addition to the over 5,000 masks purchased using grant funding for staff and visitors as needed. Posters depicting correct wearing of masks have been placed throughout the school for guidance for all K-5 scholars. The school nurse will conduct student workshops on correct mask wearing for all K-5 scholars. The workshops will be conducted during Health/Physical Education classes. The workshops will be conducted on an on-going basis throughout SY 2021-2022 and also determined based on current available data and science.

Masking protocols outlined in Executive Order No. 175, which are aligned with current CDC recommendations, remain in place. The Order includes an exception to masking requirements outdoors during periods of extreme heat. Additionally, the Order includes an exception to masking protocols in situations where wearing a mask would inhibit an individual's health. Please be advised that the Governor has clarified that this indoor masking exception could reasonably be applied to situations in which a district determines, at its discretion and based on its assessment of the individual circumstances, that a period of extreme heat warrants students and staff to remove their masks while indoors to protect individual health. As always, unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to continue wearing masks while participating in activities that include sustained contact with others, or when in a crowded setting. (June 7, 2021).

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

Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) has been purchased to ensure all students and staff have their own personal spacing (desks shields for example) to maintain physical distancing. The school has also put in place markers and arrows throughout the building to regulate social distancing as applicable. Posters regulating social distancing are placed throughout the school. In addition, the school entrance and dismissal locations will continue to be staggered throughout SY 2021-2022 as long as needed. There are three entry points at the school for entrance and dismissal with only two grades entering or dismissing from any one of the entry points. Under “normal” circumstances, BCSE would host “morning meetings” in the gymnasium for community building on a daily basis. However, this practice will continue to be “on hold” and morning meetings will be conducted in the classroom to minimize and to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Scholars and staff will be required to wash hands after coughing or sneezing and often throughout the day. Washing the germs is always best and the preferred method. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer will kill the viruses, but not wash them away. Posters and signs are posted throughout the building on correct handwashing procedures as well as for respiratory etiquette. School nurse also conducts student workshops on correct handwashing and respiratory etiquette for all K-5 scholars. “Lunch and Learn” style workshops are the preferred method to conduct the student training to mitigate any impact to the instructional day. Health classes also provide opportunities for Burch scholars to review best practices in handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The school will maintain daily cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and bathrooms. Weekly after school, the school will be closed to students and non-essential staff to perform

deep cleaning and sanitization (Sani-Spray). The school will minimize use of shared objects, ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation (air purifiers), prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students wash hands frequently.

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

As Burch resumes in-person learning, case investigations and contact tracing with staff, students and parents, community members is an effective strategy to identify and isolate cases and test and quarantine close contacts to reduce transmission of COVID-19.

Burch will collaborate with the Irvington Health Department (IHD) as well as with state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) health departments when investigating cases and exposures to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Burch and IHD will coordinate with local counsel and the state or U.S. Department of Education to ensure compliance with applicable laws related to privacy and the collection/sharing of this information as they undertake these activities.

Burch Students, staff, and educators diagnosed with COVID-19 will isolate and stay away from the school/IHE premises until requirements for end of isolation are met.

Burch officials will report COVID-19 cases to the health department, in accordance with applicable privacy and other laws as soon as they are informed.

Burch will support case investigation and contact tracing quickly in order to prepare and provide information and records to aid in the identification of potential exposures and close contacts at the school or facilities or events.

Burch will notify close contacts (and families of close contacts in the K-5 school setting), in accordance with applicable privacy and other laws, of exposure as soon as possible after they are notified that someone in the school has tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19.

All activities and information collected by a K-5 school and IHD should be consistent with applicable federal, state, tribal, local, and territorial privacy, public health, health/medical, and workplace laws and regulations.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The school will complete daily health screenings on students and staff (this will include weekend screening as well). Families will be trained on how to fill out the health screener over the summer. All persons that enter the building will have to have their temperature taken. All parents and visitors will have to complete a health screener prior to the entire building ([paper or digital formats). The school will follow CDC guidelines and work with the local health department when a school community member (student, staff, parent and/or visitor) shows symptoms or history of exposure to COVID19. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. If Burch Charter School becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in our school tests positive for COVID-19, district officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. COVID-19 testing will occur four times a year for staff and pools of students using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER 2).

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

At this time, the school is not able to provide vaccinations in-house. All staff members have been encouraged to seek COVID-19 vaccinations based on established criteria. A survey was sent to staff to determine “vaccine hesitancy”. The majority of Burch staff anonymously informed through the survey that they would seek the vaccine. The only exceptions that were delineated through the survey were:

Religious Exemption
Pregnancy
Recommendation of Medical Doctor

If Governor Murphy mandates school staff to be vaccinated for SY 2021-2022, Burch, of course, will follow that mandate.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies Burch Charter School of Excellence will ensure the delivery of special education and related services to students with disabilities. The BCSE Special Education Evaluation Pandemic Plan addresses strict adherence to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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)

Burch Charter School of Excellence is hiring a Reading Specialist and two Academic Interventionists to address learning acceleration. In addition the BCSE will also add a part-time School Counselor along with Move This World curriculum to focus on social emotional learning and well-being of all scholars and staff. To address food services, BCSE will stagger lunch periods in three to four locations (weather permitting) that are spaced to allow social distancing.

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)

School leaders' and staff members' comments and input were received during staff input meetings held on June 7- 8, 2021. Burch school staff had three different input sessions from all the internal school stakeholders. This template was reviewed with the school staff, and at each session, recommendations / suggestions were sought and provided. The feedback from the staff assisted with making changes to this plan and provided internal recommendations for when school safely reopens in the fall of SY 2021-2022.

A public meeting was held on June 9, 2021 at 6PM - Virtually. During the public meeting, the Burch Charter School of Excellence's school leaders shared the initial draft of the BCSE's Safe School Reopening Plan with the public via google meet. The public meeting entailed school leaders taking the audience through the plan and asking for suggestions / recommendations. After each part of the plan was discussed, school leaders also gave the public the opportunity to ask questions and seek any additional information from the school leaders.

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)

BCSE will provide a format that is user friendly and translated upon request. The plan will also be shared during August's Parent University and Back to School Night. If needed parents can meet in one to one session with administration. The BCSE Safe School Reopening Plan will be placed on the school's website and other social media accounts for review on a continuous basis as per NJDOE guidelines.