

Paterson Public Schools' Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Paterson Public Schools

Date: (6/9/2021)

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

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 district will institute the following protocols regarding masks:

1. All students, staff and visitors entering Paterson Public Schools will be required to wear a mask upon entering all buildings inclusive of central office and facilities.
2. Anyone entering the building without a mask, will be provided a disposable mask by the security guard welcoming them to the building.
3. Masks must be always worn over the individual's nose and mouth, except when eating or drinking.
4. During **outside** recess, students will be allowed to take off their masks, as long as they maintain the appropriate Social Distancing of three to six feet.
5. Students that are unable to wear a traditional cloth or medical mask will be able to request a facial shield.
6. The nurse or individual covering the "Medical Sick Room" (isolation room) will wear both a medical grade mask as well as a facial shield.

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

- **Classrooms:** Paterson Public Schools staff will continue to utilize physical distancing strategies to increase spacing between individuals, inclusive of seating arrangements in classrooms. Furniture will be adjusted accordingly to accommodate for distancing. Additionally, staff will use strategies to minimize mixing between groups whenever possible. Students will continue to use the trifold partitions in the classrooms.
- **Cafeterias:** Physical distancing will be in accordance with NJDOH guidelines at the time. Students will use their trifold partitions as an added layer of protection.
- **Transportation:** Physical distancing will be encouraged where possible. Students will sit one per row, unless they are from the same household.
- **Traveling:** Signs will remain throughout the building regarding maintaining social distancing and keeping to the right when walking in the hallways
- The District will continue to follow guidance with regards to physical distancing from the NJDOH

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- **Handwashing:** All bathrooms are stocked with supplies of soap and paper towels for hand washing and tissue for respiratory etiquette. Hand sanitizing stations (60% alcohol) are available in classrooms, common areas, and hallways to support students and staff to wash or sanitize hands frequently.
- **Respiratory etiquette:** All bathrooms and classrooms are stocked with paper towels and tissue to covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or using a tissue or paper towel, placing it in the trash, followed by immediate handwashing or hand sanitizing.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The Facilities Department is taking all the necessary precautions to ensure the safety and health of our staff, students, and families, guided by CDC recommendations and New Jersey Department of Education mandates and the Governor's Executive Orders.

The District will refocus its general cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection protocols in school buildings on COVID-19 prevention. EPA registered products will be used to disinfect program spaces, offices, and common areas.

Health & safety training of custodial staff will include proper utilization of PPE, updates to overall cleaning protocols, and other COVID-19 prevention measures such as the routine disinfecting of touch points, fixtures, and the disinfecting of areas immediately after a reported COVID-19 exposure.

Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed throughout district facilities in common areas and classrooms. Signs to promote hand washing and sanitizing are placed near dispensers.

Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning-

We are ensuring that all outstanding work orders on HVAC systems are completed in a timely manner. We are also amending the Indoor Air Quality policies and procedures with a provision to allow for supplemental ventilation, by opening windows in each program space and office, as recommended by the CDC and ASHRE.

Current regulations call for the use of, at minimum, MERV 8 filters. However, the District will install MERV 11 filters throughout all buildings with compatible ventilation systems, where performance is not compromised.

Ionizing air purification devices are installed in all classrooms, offices, Medical Sick Rooms, nurse stations.

Isolation areas, as mandated by the state, are to be identified in every school. Plexiglass barriers will segregate the occupants in the area and the area will be monitored continually by a person outside the space, with a clear line of sight into the isolation area. A complete package of PPE will be provided for monitors.

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

Contact Tracing: Contact tracing is conducted by the school nurses in combination with the isolation and quarantine guidelines provided by NJ Health, CDC, and NJDOE. The district collaborates with the City of Paterson Department of Health, school district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and school nurses. Any other staff deemed appropriate that may be provided with information regarding positive COVID-19 cases and close contacts. The role of contact tracing is conducted to keep school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease and provides guidance to the school community.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The District has contracted with a private provider of COVID-19 testing services in order to ensure that students and staff members have ready access to diagnostic testing as needed. The provider will establish operational procedures, provide licensed healthcare

personnel to administer tests, obtain consent from patients, supply FDA-approved PCR saliva tests and necessary personal protective equipment, process tests at CLIA-certified labs, and report results to patients and District representatives. Although screening testing is not being implemented at this time, the District will implement a screening testing strategy if warranted by local pandemic conditions.

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

Paterson Public Schools has developed various partnerships to ensure staff and student vaccinations. On March 15, 2021 the district began a vaccination drive for staff. The district partnered with St. Joseph's Hospital at Dr. Hani Awadallah Elementary School and Hackensack Meridian Health at the Meadowlands to provide the Moderna vaccine. The district also worked with Calvary Baptist church to provide staff the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. As a result of these efforts, approximately, 1,000 staff signed up for vaccinations. Additional district staff have been vaccinated via alternate means.

When student vaccinations for ages 12 and older were made available, the district conducted a COVID-19 vaccination drive as well. In an effort to assure clear communication and registration process for students and families, the district created the COVID-19 Student vaccination page on the district website (http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/11_pages/StudentCOVID19Vaccination.php) with sign up information and pertinent documents.

Additionally, the district conducted two informational community forums (one in Spanish and one in English) with Hackensack Meridian. At these remote forums, the Paterson community was able to ask a panel of Hackensack doctors questions regarding COVID-19 and vaccines.

The district will continue to offer vaccinations to staff and students.

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

Certain students with disabilities or severe respiratory impairments who cannot tolerate the use of face-coverings will be asked to wear a full face shield as an alternative, even though face shields provide less protection than face-coverings. Other accommodations with respect to health and safety policies will be granted as required under applicable federal and State laws and regulations concerning non-discrimination and disability rights.

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)

All Paterson Public Schools will have the support of a full-time mental health clinician on staff through Full Service Community Schools and the School Based Health Solutions Grant. School Based Health Solutions provides each school with at least one Transitional Coach who will provide individual, group and family counseling, as well as professional development for staff. Teachers will increase their capacity to attend to their own, and students social and emotional needs with the support of Mindful Schools. Additionally, Paterson Public Schools will continue its social justice and equity work by expanding professional development beyond the core equity team to include building administrators and teachers, as well as a youth advocacy component for students.

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 district developed a comprehensive reopening plan titled Keeping the Promise- Restart plan in collaboration with parents, Board of Education commissioners, teachers, administrators, community leaders and clergy via the District's Restart Task Force Committees. In anticipation for reopening in September 2020, the hosted district three (3) Restart meetings on July 30th, August 3rd, and August 4th for the community at large. Additionally, the Superintendent and her leadership held meetings from July 22nd through August 3rd with Administrators/Principals, Teachers, Instructional Assistants, Personal Assistants, and students. In September, after the district did not open for in-person instruction, revision continued to the Keeping the Promise Restart Plan and updates were made as CDC and State guidance were adjusted. In January 2021, the COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Board was convened comprised to vet and review the plan to reopen the Paterson Public School District which included all safety precautions, attendance, facilities, schedules, and all guidelines as outlined by NJDOE and the CDC. The COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Board reviewed and provided feedback and recommendations allowing for modifications to the plan on January 10th, February 20th and February 24th.

In anticipation for June 2021 reopening in person, the Superintendent and her Leadership Team conducted two (2) community forums on May 17th (in English) and May 18th (in Spanish). At both forums, stakeholders were afforded the opportunity to ask questions via a question-and-answer section. Forums were recorded and posted on the district website for stakeholders who were unable to attend the forums.

The Board of Education were presented with sections of the restart plan relating to facilities, PPE, remote scheduling, COVID-19 PPE Demonstration and “A Day in the Life of a Paterson Student” videos.

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 Paterson Public Schools comprehensive restart plan titled Keeping the Promise is available to the school community and other stakeholders via a booklet format, condensed PowerPoint presentation and in a recorded oral format on the district’s website. The Superintendent and her Leadership Team conducted two (2) community forums on May 17th and May 18th. The forum of May 18th was conducted in Spanish. Additionally, Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan will be sent to the district translation service for translation in Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Bengali. Additionally, upon the request of previous community forum feedback, the COVID safety precaution signs were translated in Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Bengali. The signs were disseminated to district schools and offices. A remote Community Forum is planned for Tuesday, June 15th to share this plan with the district community.