

1648 RESTART AND RECOVERY PLAN (M)

On June 26, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) published “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” (Guidance), a guidance document for reopening New Jersey schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Guidance provided school officials with the information necessary to ensure that schools reopen safely and are prepared to accommodate staff and students’ unique needs during these unprecedented times. The NJDOE required school districts in the State to develop, in collaboration with community stakeholders, a “Restart and Recovery Plan” (Plan) to reopen schools that best fits the district’s local needs.

The Guidance requires the Board of Education to adopt certain policies and the Board adopts Policy 1648 to address those policy requirements in the Guidance. Policy 1648 shall only be effective through the current COVID-19 pandemic and will take precedence over any existing Policy on the same or similar subject, unless determined otherwise by the Superintendent.

A. NJDOE Guidance – Key Subject Area 1 – Conditions for Learning

1. Transportation

- a. If the school district is providing transportation services on a school bus, a face covering must be worn by all students upon entering the school bus unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities. Exceptions to the face covering requirements shall be those outlined in A.2.d. below:
 - (1) Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering should be addressed according to that student's particular need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- b. The school district shall use best practices for cleaning and disinfecting district-owned school buses and other transportation vehicles in accordance with A.3. below.
- c. District-employed school bus drivers and aides on district-owned school buses shall practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other school staff.
- d. If the school district is using contracted transportation services, the contractor shall ensure all Board of Education safety actions and protocols are followed by the contractor and its employees and/or its agents.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix C for the protocols/procedures for “Transportation” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

2. Screening, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms
 - a. The school district shall screen students and employees upon arrival to a school building or work location for COVID-19 symptoms and a history of exposure.
 - (1) School staff must visually check students and employees for symptoms upon arrival (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms.
 - (2) Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
 - (3) Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
 - (4) The screening protocol will take into account students and employees with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students and employees.
 - (5) Students and employees with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
 - (6) If the school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a school district facility tests positive for COVID-19, district officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
 - b. School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age.
 - (1) If a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual at the point of entry, the visitor's entry to the school/district facility may be denied.

- c. Students are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.
 - (1) Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering should be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

- d. Exceptions to the Requirement for Face Coverings
 - (1) Doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
 - (2) The individual is in extreme heat outdoors.
 - (3) The individual is in water.
 - (4) A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering.
 - (5) The student is under the age of two, due to the risk of suffocation.
 - (6) During the period a student is eating or drinking.
 - (7) Face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g. face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time).
 - (8) The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
 - (9) Face coverings may be removed during gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart.
 - (10) When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix E for the protocols/procedures for “Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

3. Facilities Cleaning Practices

- a. The school district must continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise.
- b. A procedure manual must be developed to establish cleaning and disinfecting schedules for schools and school equipment, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix G for the protocols/procedures for – “Facilities Cleaning Practices” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

4. Wraparound Supports

- a. Mental Health Supports

The school district’s approach to student mental health supports will be affected by the learning environment in place at the beginning of the school year. If in-person instruction is not feasible, the district must find other ways to assess and monitor students’ mental health.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix K for the protocols/procedures for “Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

5. Contact Tracing

- a. Upon notification that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will call the school district to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus, where close contact is defined as being within six feet for a period of at least ten minutes.
- b. The school district shall assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.

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- c. The school district shall ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.
- d. A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee and shall be responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.
- e. School districts shall allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix F for the protocols/procedures for “Contact Tracing” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

B. NJDOE Guidance – Key Subject Area 2 – Leadership and Planning

1. Scheduling

- a. The school district’s Plan must account for resuming in-person instruction and shall provide steps to shift back to virtual learning models if circumstances change and in-person instruction guidelines can no longer be followed.
- b. The school district’s Plan accommodates opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, while ensuring requirements for a 180-day school year are met.
- c. The school district recognizes special populations will require unique considerations to ensure the continuity of learning as well as the health and safety of students and staff within the least restrictive environment.

(1) Special Education and English Language Learners (ELL)

- (a) The school district shall provide educators with professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based formats in accordance with this Policy.
- (b) The school district shall continue to ensure students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of the IEP and 504 Plans.

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[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix N for the protocols/procedures for “Scheduling of Students” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

2. Staffing

- a. The school district shall comply with all applicable employment laws when making staffing and scheduling requirements, including, but not limited to, the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), and all applicable State laws.
- b. As the school district adjusts schedules, teaching staff members must maintain quality instruction for students pursuant to the minimum requirements set forth in NJDOE regulation.

[See Policy Guide 1648 – Appendix O for the protocols/procedures for “Staffing” which is also included in the school district’s Restart and Recovery Plan.]

C. NJDOE Guidance – Key Subject Area 3 – Policy and Funding

1. School Funding

a. Purchasing

The school district may likely need to purchase items not needed in the past and may experience increased demand for previously purchased goods and services to implement the Plan. The school district shall continue to comply with the provisions of the “Public School Contracts Law”, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.

b. Use of Reserve Accounts, Transfers, and Cashflow

The school district shall apply for the approval from the Commissioner of Education, prior to performing certain budget actions, such as withdrawing from the emergency reserve account or making transfers that cumulatively exceed ten percent of the amount originally budgeted.

c. Costs and Contracting

The school district shall follow all New Jersey State laws and regulations applicable to local school districts for purchasing when procuring devices and connectivity or any technology related item.

D. NJDOE Guidance – Key Subject Area 4 – Continuity of Learning

1. Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities
 - a. The school district shall continue to meet their obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.

2. Professional Learning
 - a. The school district shall prepare and support teaching staff members in meeting the social, emotional, health, and academic needs of all students throughout the implementation of the Plan.
 - (1) Professional Learning
 - (a) The school district shall grow each teaching staff member’s professional capacity to deliver developmentally appropriate standards-based instruction remotely.

 - (2) Mentoring and Induction
 - (a) The school district shall ensure:
 - (i) All novice provisional teachers new to the district be provided induction;
 - (ii) One-to-one mentoring is provided to novice provisional teachers by qualified mentors;
 - (iii) Mentors can provide sufficient support and guidance to novice provisional teachers working in a remote environment;
 - (iv) Mentoring is provided in both hybrid and fully remote learning environments and that mentors and provisional teachers will agree upon scheduling, structure, and communication strategies they will use to maintain the mentoring experience; and

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- (v) The use of online collaborative tools for school staff to remain connected to other mentors, new teachers, and administrators to maintain a sense of communal support.
 - (3) Evaluation
 - (a) The school district has considered the requirements and best practices with provisional status teachers, nontenured educators, and those on Corrective Action Plans (including extra observations, extra observers, assuring more frequent feedback and face-to-face).
- 3. Career and Technical Education (CTE)
 - a. The school district shall implement innovative learning models for new learning environments regarding CTE.
 - b. Quality CTE Programs

The school district shall ensure students have access to appropriate industry-recognized, high-value credentials.
 - c. Work-Based Learning

The school district will ensure students are provided the opportunity to participate in safe work-based learning, either remotely (simulations, virtual tours, etc.) or in-person.

New Jersey Department of Education “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education”

Memorandum – New Jersey Governor and Department of Education – Conditions for Learning – Health and Safety – August 3, 2020

Adopted: 10 August 2020

Revised: 14 December 2020