



## 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

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LEA Name: Morris Hills Regional District

Date (mm/dd/yyyy):06/21/21

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 continue to follow the most current guidelines provided by the New Jersey Department of Health and our local Health Departments, which also takes into consideration CDC guidance. The latest New Jersey information regarding mask-wearing can be found [here](#).

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

The district will continue to provide appropriate social distancing in all areas (classrooms, common areas, cafeterias, buses, outdoors, etc.) in accordance with the most recent guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health and our local Health Departments, which also takes into consideration CDC guidance. The most recent social distancing guidelines for schools in New Jersey can be found [here](#).

### C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The district will continue to follow all handwashing and respiratory etiquette guidelines as outlined [here](#) by the New Jersey Department of Health, which takes into consideration the most recent CDC guidance.

### D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The district has implemented an extensive cleaning and sanitizing program. Custodians are scheduled to sanitize high-risk, touch areas with approved sanitizers and cleaners. The district has contracted an outside HVAC vendor to clean and sanitize all univents in the schools in August. All HVAC units that have removable filters will be changed twice per year (or increased as needed or recommended).

We have implemented an exhaust fan upgrade in both high schools. This project has made needed repairs and upgrades to numerous exhaust fans, greatly improving the air movement in the buildings. The district is in the process of upgrading the HVAC system in Morris Hills High School this fall/winter and adding additional AC to numerous classrooms in Morris Knolls High School .

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

The Morris Hills Regional School District will work closely with and provide all necessary information to the Department of Health to assist them in Contact Tracing processes and protocol. Members of the Morris Hills Regional District Administrative Team, School Safety Specialists, and nursing staff have completed three hours of the John Hopkins University Contact Tracing Course.

Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation. Students with confirmed symptoms will be safely and respectfully isolated from others under the supervision of a school nurse. School officials will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. The Morris Hills Regional District has established isolation spaces. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students will remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Parents/guardians will be required to conduct a daily health screening for their child and certify that they will not send their children to school if they are exhibiting any possible symptoms of COVID-19. Parents or caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day. Administrators and staff members will conduct daily visual screenings of students entering the building. Staff members will also be required to conduct a daily self-assessment/health screening of COVID-19 symptoms.

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

All members of the MHRD faculty and staff have been provided with an opportunity to receive a vaccination through Saint Clare's Hospital in Denville, NJ.

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

The MHRD will follow all accommodations for students with disabilities as outlined in the Individualized Education Plan. Additional PPE will be provided for staff working closely with students with special needs. Additional PPE as well as a behaviorist will be made available for all students with special needs that require additional assistance to abide by the health and safety protocols.

## 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)

Academic Needs: The district will continue to use a tiered system of supports as outlined in the [district's re-entry plan on pages 67-70](#). The district will continue to use existing after-school programs through Title I and Title III, which will be supplemented by additional after-school programs to meet the academic needs of struggling students, included but not limited to at-risk students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Families and students will be provided with information regarding available services through the school counseling department. The district will use diagnostic and other assessment data, including teacher recommendation, to identify students in need of additional support.

Social/Emotional and Mental Health Needs:

The District will continue to address social emotional learning and mental health needs through our school based programs, counseling services, parent wellness series, and by collaborating with local agencies.

Food Services:

The district will offer meals to all students. A grab and go model will be used to distribute and will consist of packaged food.

## 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)

The district has distributed surveys to staff, students, and families asking for anticipated needs. The district has also posted the Safe Reopening Plan Template on its website and invited members of the public to come to the Board meeting to provide public comment. Survey results and public comments will be considered in the development and ongoing review of the plan.

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 district will have a copy of the plan posted on its website in both English and Spanish as a PDF document. It will also be posted directly on the website, which can be translated into 9 additional languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Korean, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian). The district will have staff available to orally communicate the information to individuals with disabilities upon request.