



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: North Arlington School District

Date: (6/15/2021)

Date Revised: (8/10/21) & (12/13/2021)

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 North Arlington School District has reviewed all aspects of “The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year,” which was sponsored by Governor Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). Within this document, it states that updated CDC guidance will factor into the final recommendations, which led to Governor Murphy’s Executive Order (EO) 251 (Governor Murphy Announces Indoor Mask Requirement for Beginning of 2021-2022 School Year). EO 251 is set to expire on January 11, 2022; however, it may be extended or modified by Governor Murphy. Our team will continue to monitor relevant health and safety guidelines, while also gaining feedback from a number of stakeholders through committee-based meetings. Additionally, we will continue to update the Safe Return Plan to comply with recommendations set forth by the NJDOE and NJDOH, while also adhering to any mandates that Governor Murphy may establish.**

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): **As outlined in “The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year,” physical distancing recommendations must not prevent a school from offering full-day, full-time, in person learning to all students for the 2021-2022 school year. In accordance with the aforementioned plan, all rooms in our district facilities comply with recommended social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable. Physical guides are also in place, which reinforce social distancing and traffic flow. Physical barriers may also be requested and additional entry/exit points have been established to balance distancing and security protocols.**

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: **The district promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as encouraging the practice of hand hygiene. Signage is posted throughout the facilities in the North Arlington School District and hand sanitizing stations, which contain at least 60% alcohol, are placed in each classroom in addition to common areas throughout each building. Students practice appropriate hand hygiene at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.**

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: **All classrooms and high traffic areas are currently equipped with hand sanitizer dispensers. Throughout the buildings, copy machines and school-based printers have nitrile gloves next to them as well as disinfectant wipes to wipe the machines after usage. Throughout the day, bathrooms are wiped and sprayed down using Bioesque, an EPA approved disinfectant spray. All rooms, districtwide, undergo a thorough surface wipe-down and are fogged daily using the Bioesque. In addition, all air units have been upgraded to run on MERV13 filters. They have also been treated and cleaned with EVAP Fresh.**

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: **The North Arlington School District collaborates with the local health department in regards to necessary reporting, contact tracing, and quarantine guidelines. Individuals displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are safely and respectfully isolated from others. Re-admittance policies are consistent with New Jersey Department of Health guidance, along with the exclusion criteria outlined in “The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year.” Although New Jersey’s travel advisory is no longer in effect, we continue to follow guidance issued by the NJDOH, specifically regarding recommendations related to self-quarantining and travel.**

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: **As recommended by the New Jersey Department of Health, at all levels of community transmission, the North Arlington School District works with the local health department to identify rapid viral testing options in the community for the testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19. We will continue to follow all protocols set forth by Governor Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the New Jersey Department of Education, which currently includes EO 253 (Instituting Vaccination or Testing Requirement for All Preschool to Grade 12 Personnel and for All State Workers) through a partnership with Meadowlands Diagnostics.**

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: **Any information on vaccines is disseminated via the Parent Portal to our school community. In addition, each notification we receive from the Bergen County Superintendent's Office is shared with our school community. We are currently exploring the possibility of hosting vaccination sites at schools after traditional school hours.**

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies: **Screening protocols for individuals presenting symptoms take into account students and employees with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students and employees. All students, including children with disabilities, will be afforded the same opportunity to have a clear desk barrier and/or face shield. As noted in item C, increased hand hygiene will be practiced, which includes washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or access to sanitizing stations that contain at least 60% alcohol. Requests for additional accommodations will be reviewed in coordination with our school nurses and Child Study Team.**

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): In order to support the social emotional state of our educators, the district will: **Our district-wide 2021-2022 Professional Development Plan (PDP) focuses on the**

development and implementation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) supports within and outside of the classroom in order to support the well-being of all students. Training related to mental health will be provided to district staff. In coordination with CarePlus - NJ Mental Healthcare, our district has contracted a full-time K-12 licensed clinical social worker for the 2021-2022 school year. A new position was also created for a Student Assistance Coordinator to provide counseling related to substance abuse and overall mental health, providing individualized support regarding social and emotional well-being. Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO), free school meals will continue throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

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-wide Safe Return Committee has met to review the initial and updated Safe Return Plans. At the June 15, 2021 Board of Education meeting, the Board presented the plan and sought public comment during the hearing of citizens to address any concerns regarding the Safe Return Plan. The same approach was taken leading towards revisions on August 10, 2021. The revised plan will be presented at the December 13, 2021 Board of Education meeting. Once again, we will seek public comment during the hearing of the citizens to address any concerns regarding the Safe Return 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 Superintendent of Schools has regularly shared information with the school community in their native languages and will continue to do so. Information regarding reopening is published on the district website at www.navikings.org. For those members of the public whose first language is not English, the website has the ability to translate text and documents into multiple languages. Upon request and if necessary, an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be provided information in an alternative format that is accessible for that parent or guardian. Our district website is ADA compliant.**