



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), (6/15/2022), (12/12/22), (6/13/23), (12/11/23) & (6/12/24)

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 regularly reviews updated recommendations outlined in the “Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs” and the weekly “COVID-19 and Respiratory Illness Activity Report,” released by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). We are working closely with the North Arlington Department of Health (NADOH) to consider the aforementioned recommendations, in addition to guidelines released by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Governor Murphy. Our team will continue to monitor relevant health and safety guidelines, while also gaining feedback from a number of stakeholders through the review of this plan.**

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): **As outlined in “Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs,” schools will continue to review all relevant health and safety guidelines. Although there are no specific physical distancing guidelines at this time, we will continue to implement aforementioned strategies to reduce the spread of infectious disease. 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 and other respiratory viruses, 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 are encouraged to 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 disinfectant wipes to wipe the machines after usage. Throughout the day, high-touch areas and bathrooms are regularly cleaned. All classrooms are regularly cleaned with Bioesque, an EPA approved disinfectant spray. Additionally, all air units have been upgraded to run on MERV13 filters and continue to be 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 NADOH in regards to necessary reporting, contact tracing, and quarantine guidelines. We continue to follow the NJDOH School Exclusion List regarding individuals displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and all respiratory illnesses. Re-admittance policies are consistent with New Jersey Department of Health guidance outlined in the “Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs.” We continue to review guidance issued by the NJDOH and the CDC.**

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: **As recommended by the NJDOH, at all levels of community transmission, the North Arlington School District works with the NADOH to identify 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 mandated protocols set forth by Governor Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Health, and/or the New Jersey Department of Education.**

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: **Any information on vaccines is disseminated electronically to our school community. Additionally, each notification we receive from the Bergen County Superintendent's Office is shared with our school community.**

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: **Training related to mental health will continue to be provided to district staff. In 2023-2024, our district has contracted with West Bergen Mental Health to provide mental health services for students and staff. The position of Student Assistance Coordinator, which was expanded to full-time, will continue to provide counseling related to substance abuse and overall mental health, providing individualized support regarding social and emotional well-being. An additional school counselor position was added to our high school for the 2023-2024 school year. We will continue to monitor guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the NJDOE as we continue to participate in the National School Lunch Program.**

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 met to establish the initial Safe Return Plan and continues to review and update the Safe Return Plan, in accordance with established timelines. This revised plan will be presented at the June 12, 2024 Board of Education meeting and the Board will seek public comment during the hearing of the citizens to address any concerns regarding the Safe Return Plan. The same approach was taken on August 10, 2021, December 13, 2021, June 15, 2022, December 12, 2022, June 13, 2023, and December 11, 2023.**

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.**