



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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: UPPER SADDLE RIVER SCHOOLS

Date: 06/14/2021

Date Revised: 12/13/21; 6/13/22; 12/12/22; 6/12/2023; 12/18/2023

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 required all students and staff to wear masks on school grounds, except for excessive heat days, for the first half of the 2021/22 school year. In March 2022, mask wearing became optional for all. The district expects to continue to maintain a mask optional environment for the start of the next school year unless otherwise directed by the Governor.

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

Physical distancing measures were put in place during the 2020-21 school year, including: hybrid cohort sections, desk separation, and maps/routes in schools to minimize large crowds. For the 2021-22 school year, the district assessed the current state of health with regard to COVID-19 and followed the current guidance from the Governor and related state agencies. The district was prepared to enact a variety of mitigation protocols based on our experiences from this school year. For the 2022-23 school year, we do not anticipate establishing physical distancing protocols unless otherwise directed by the Governor. Based on the previous school year, unless otherwise directed by the Governor, we do not anticipate establishing physical distancing protocols during the 2023/2024 school year.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

The district will continue with more frequent handwashing opportunities during the school day, particularly at key points of the day when germ transmission can be higher. In addition, the Certified School Nurse has created and will continue to utilize instructional videos and make classroom visits in all grades, K-8, to educate students about general hygiene and health practices for the purpose of building strong habits in students that are

preventative for any communicable disease transmission.

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

The district cleaned and disinfected surface areas (desks and chairs), door knobs, bathrooms, and other facilities multiple times a day during the global pandemic. Classrooms were equipped with Lysol wipes and hand sanitizer on a regular basis. For cleaning purposes, the district will maintain a high standard of cleanliness with regard to the surface areas, facilities, and classrooms on a daily basis. The cleaning protocols used from 2020-21 were carried over to the 2021/22, 2022/23 school years and will continue in the 2023/2024 school year. The Univent systems use high quality filters, which are and will continue to be checked and replaced on a quarterly basis.

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

The district administrative team and school nurse were trained in contact tracing. Incorporating these practices with all COVID-19 cases (and suspected cases), the district operated with precise management and communication until masks became optional on March 7, 2022. From that point forward and until otherwise directed by the Governor, the district completed all mandatory reports by gathering specific information about individual COVID-19 cases and followed current requirements for quarantines. Additionally, the school district notified families for children who are in the same classroom with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

Based on the current health and New Jersey State Health Department guidance, the district will determine if it is appropriate and necessary to have individuals complete the health screener as precautionary measure.

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

The district has and will continue to keep all members of the school-community informed about local vaccination opportunities. The nurse's office maintains records of staff and students who have voluntarily provided their vaccine cards.

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

The Director of Special Services and the child study teams are meeting with all families who have classified children to write and/or amend IEPs based on

potential issues with health regulations (masks) and academic, social, and emotional effects from the previous school year.

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.):

The district adjusted its 2021-22 formative assessment schedule and basic skills support system to accommodate students who may require additional interventions. Link It benchmarking and district formative assessment data has been collected in conjunction with state diagnostic testing. These data points have been used to guide instructional interventions. The district has also collected social-emotional individualized data using a program, Panorama, to address gaps and needs by individuals, groups, grade clusters, and themes.

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:

The Safe Reopening Plan was revised and will be Board approved at the December 13, 2021 BOE meeting. The revised plan will be submitted to the Department of Education and available on the district website for the public to view. The plan was revised and approved again at the June 13, 2022 BOE meeting. The revised plan will again be submitted to the Department of Education and available on the district website for the public to view. The plan was revised and approved at the June 12, 2023 BOE meeting. The revised plan will be submitted to the Department of Education and available on the district website for the public to view.

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:

The plan will be available online with easy access. It is written in plain language that is understandable to community members who do not have professional educational knowledge. Contact information will be available for anyone to reach out with questions about the contents of the plan.