



## 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: North Haledon School District

Date: 06/16/2021

Date Revised: July 9, 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:**

North Haledon School District will continue to follow NJDOH and NJDOE guidance as it pertains to the use of masks and other health and safety practices. During the 2020-2021 school year and in accordance with NJDOE, CDC, and State guidance, masks were utilized by all individuals indoors, as well as outdoors, when social distancing was not permissible. In accordance with NJ state guidance, masking requirements were relaxed in situations where students and staff are exposed to extreme heat. Masks were removed for meals and when needed for breaks. In addition, masking requirements were waived in situations where wearing a mask poses a health risk to the individual. As with all safety and health practices, masking requirements are subject to change based on new guidance provided by the state of NJ and/or our local health department. For September 2021 and per Governor Murphy's directive as to not making face coverings mandatory in schools, the North Haledon School District will go optional for all staff and students. We will, though, recommend face coverings to those who have not been vaccinated.

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

Physical distancing will continue to be encouraged and facilitated to the extent possible and as recommended by the CDC, NJDOE, and NJDOH. At this time North Haledon School District is planning for the return of all students to in person, full day instruction beginning September 2021. As a result, students will no longer be grouped into cohorts or follow a hybrid learning model. All efforts will be made to maintain distance between students, including protective barriers placed at each student desk and during lunch with dividers on the cafeteria tables.

**C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:**

Preventive health practices will continue to be encouraged and facilitated for students and staff. Sanitizing stations are accessible in the hallways and classrooms. Protective barriers (sneeze guards) will be added to our lunch rooms. Frequent hand washing breaks will be provided throughout the school day. Bathrooms will be monitored to prevent crowding and will be frequently cleaned throughout the day. High traffic areas and touch points will also be disinfected throughout the school day. In addition, facilities will undergo deep cleanings in the evenings. Classroom wipes will be provided in order to maintain proper hygiene and prevent the spread of germs. These measures will continue to be reinforced through reminders to staff, students, and our community. Visuals will remain displayed throughout the district's facilities indicating the importance of handwashing, hallway direction, spacing, and other health and safety practices.

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

The district had an analysis done of the HVAC systems in both buildings and both systems were found to be operating as per manufacturer specifications. HVAC system maintenance is performed twice per year by an outside vendor, as well as all filters being changed quarterly by district maintenance staff. MERV 7 filters are used in all units as per manufacturer guidelines. In the fall of 2020, GPS Needlepoint Bi-Polar Ionization equipment was installed in all HVAC units in both buildings. This provides additional filtration which allows increased filtration up to a Merv-13 rating. All windows and doors are operational in both buildings which allows for additional ventilation and for outside air to be introduced into classrooms and the lunchroom. A bid is in process to replace the boilers at High Mountain School to ensure comfortable temperatures in classrooms at all times.

All classroom desks will have sneeze guards. The cafeteria tables will have safety dividers as well. In order to support the increase in daily cleaning once we return to full time enrollment we are anticipating increasing our custodial staff by 1 FTE in each building. The district will look to use monies from the ARP ESSER grant to replace older HVAC units.

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

Contact tracing will continue with the collaboration of our local health department. School nurses and administration will work together to identify and isolate cases, following CDC guidelines for quarantine in an effort to reduce transmission. The district will continue to review and approve policy that is provided to families in our district.

**F. Diagnostic and screening testing:**

The district will maintain temperature screenings for all students and staff. Temperature checkpoints will be located at each entrance and exit for the building. Families will complete a one-time Covid Questionnaire and acknowledgement of our health policies. Visitors will be limited to each building and must complete a Covid Questionnaire for entrance into the building and for tracing purposes.

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

The district encourages the vaccination of all staff. School nurses have provided staff members with information regarding available vaccination appointments at a variety of sites in our area. District administration has provided flexibility to staff to facilitate vaccination appointments or needed sick time after receiving the vaccine.

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

Accommodations to ensure the health and safety of students with disabilities will continue to be provided as needed. Staff working with students with disabilities will continue to adhere to NJDOH and NJDOE guidance to prevent the transmission of illness. Specialized protective gear such as N95 masks and shields will continue to be provided to staff working with students with disabilities that require physical contact throughout the day.

## **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):**

The district will be providing a Summer Learning Academy to address the academic needs of students. In addition, the district will increase focus on data driven practices, differentiation and teacher coaching. After school learning opportunities will also be provided to students during the 21-22 school year. Social emotional learning as well as student and staff mental health will be prioritized in the 2021-2022 school year... The district will be partnering with community mental health agencies to provide supports to students and staff. Other mental health initiatives include: professional development for staff, assemblies, and after school activities. Supplemental assistance and food services will continue to be provided to students as needed.

### 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 eight (8) areas of the Safe Return Plan were listed on the May 26, 2021 Board of Ed agenda under old/new business. Mr. Coffaro, our Chief School Administrator, discussed these items as they applied to the Safe Return Plan and the ARP/ESSER grant. During the public comment section of the May 26, 2021 multiple parents expressed their concerns and displeasure regarding the requirement to have students wear masks in school. These concerns were considered by district administration and the North Haledon Board of Education and it was determined that North Haledon school district will continue to follow NJDOE, NJDOH and CDC guidelines for schools. In addition, to further collect public input for the creation of this plan, a survey was sent to families. The Safe Return Plan will also be included for Board approval on the June 23, 2021 board agenda. The district will continue to seek public comment prior to each 60-day revision as required.

**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):** Accommodations for parents who may need this plan in a language other than English will be provided as needed.

