



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**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: Harrison Township School District

Date: (06/22/2021; original)

Date Revised (if applicable): January 2022

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 comply with state and local directives or requirements while providing as much normalcy as is possible for the elementary school-aged student. While the Harrison Township School District will prioritize the safety of our students and staff, it is also recognized that students in the Kindergarten through 6th grade setting, specifically, benefit from consistent opportunity to develop social skills. This development depends on practicing appropriate and consistent interaction with peers. On Friday, August 6, 2021, Governor Murphy, through the communication of Executive Order 251, mandated all students, staff and visitors to be masked when in any public, parochial or private school. Exceptions to this mandate include: a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors; b. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask without assistance; c. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face mask; d. When the individual is under two (2) years of age; e. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask; f. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity; g. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or h. When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task. On Friday, August 13, 2021, all District parents received a copy of executive order 251, as well as a description of the "Mask Exemption Request" process that the Harrison Township School District will be following for all those students who fall under one or more of the exceptions described in the executive order.

On January 11, 2022, Governor Murphy reinstated a Public Health Emergency effective immediately on that date. Additionally, the Governor ordered that Executive Order No. 251 (mandating use of face masks by staff, students and visitors in the indoor portions of school premises, except in certain specified circumstances) and Executive Order No. 253 (requiring covered workers in schools to provide proof of vaccination and to submit to testing) remain in full force and effect. The Harrison Township School District will continue to enforce the Governor's Executive Orders, as required, under the The Public Health Emergency.

Update February 2022: On February 7th , Governor Murphy announced that the mandatory requirement, under Executive Order, for all staff, students and visitors to wear masks in all New Jersey schools will be lifted effective March 7th . Based on this information, the Harrison Township School District has updated the details of our state required, Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service. Effective March 7th, our district will move to a 'Mask Optional' practice. Masks will be OPTIONAL for students, staff, and visitors. This new practice will apply during the school day, including events that occur before or after school. School buses are STILL SUBJECT TO A FEDERAL MASKING REQUIREMENT and all passengers are required to wear masks when physically on the bus. If there is a change to this federal requirement and masks are no longer required, the Harrison Township School District will go to a MASK OPTIONAL PRACTICE on school buses as part of this Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): The District will comply with state and local directives or requirements. The elementary setting provides opportunities for cohorting throughout the majority of the day, with the exception of lunch, recess, moving throughout the hallway and interventions that are part of individual students' educational plan. Students WILL not be distanced or separated by barriers in the cafeteria or during recess.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: Age appropriate signs that include visual reminders that represent proper hand washing procedures will be placed in all bathrooms and areas that include sinks. Classrooms with sinks will incorporate hand washing routines and procedures into the learning time. Classrooms without sinks will incorporate hand washing routines and procedures through utilization of the bathroom facilities during learning time. Antibacterial solutions will be accessible in every learning space, the main office entrance, nursing office, and self-care stations.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: All classrooms should have hand sanitation wipes and/or hand sanitation available for daily use; bathroom supply checks for soap and hand drying will occur daily; all common areas and frequently touched surfaces such as desks, light switches, door handles, handrails or door push bars will be wiped down frequently; electrostatic sprayers are available for nightly use where appropriate or necessary. HVAC units currently meet requirements for air quality. In September of 2020 CM3 inspected each of the 13 air conditioning units and reported on operation and condition of mechanical systems for each of these units. All air filters are replaced four times per year. At the request of union leadership, an HVAC contractor, Albireo, came to the district on March 16 to test each damper for proper working order to verify fresh air intake in compliance with state requirements.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: The Superintendent or designee will follow updated guidelines for contact tracing of any confirmed positive case of Covid 19. **During the 2021-2022 academic year, any unvaccinated person(s) who were known to be within 6 feet of a positive person for 15 cumulative minutes unmasked in a 24 hour period were contacted to quarantine. In compliance with the health department recommendations, staff and/or students with recommended vaccinations or were known to be within 90 days of being Covid-19 positive, the quarantine requirements were lifted.**

Updated February 2022: The Harrison Township School District is awaiting the new Department of Health guidance that could have an impact on our approach to contact tracing and quarantine requirements. The District will follow any updated guidelines for responding to positive cases and will keep the community apprised of any changes to the contact tracing or quarantine timelines. Under this Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service, the District is documenting that it will follow all updated quarantine timelines and guidelines without further amendment to this document, if necessary.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: **Parents completed an acknowledgment at the start of the school year regarding their child's covid health status and asked to update the district with any changes to that status throughout the duration of the school year.**

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: On January 1, 2020, the Superintendent contacted all staff to gather interest in the Covid-19 vaccine. As soon as groups of individuals were eligible. 100% of the interested staff were scheduled for vaccines at Shoprite, Walgreens, or the Gloucester County Megasite. By the district's full day opening on April 6, 2021, all interested staff had been scheduled for at least the

first shot of the two shot vaccine series. Since that date, all those **interested** staff members have been completely vaccinated. Vaccine appointments will be researched for any new staff members who express interest in the vaccine or a need for support in scheduling a vaccination.

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

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): **Students receive in person instruction daily for all areas of instruction. All lunches are available to all students, including free and reduced students, on a daily basis. Virtual support is available for all students in quarantine.**

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 sought public comment throughout the school year and continues to seek parent and community feedback. Below are specific examples:

- July 28, 2020: Survey released to parents collecting input and feedback regarding Reopening
- August 1, 2020 : Clarification for Opening
- August 3, 2020: Staff Survey for Return Needs
- Survey Monkey Survey
- The Harrison Township School District developed a Covid Task Force for Reopening. As part of this larger committee, a number of subcommittees were developed. Staff, parents and community members were invited to serve on any subcommittee of interest. The subcommittees included: General Health Committee, Food Service, Transportation, Facilities and Cleaning, Recess/PE, Social Distancing, Curriculum and Special Education, Social Emotional Learning, Technology, and Scheduling.
- November 6, 2020: Email to community reminder regarding traveling and quarantining
- Email from Superintendent and Survey to community on February 12th seeking parent feedback
- Emailed families Frequently Asked Questions Document on February 14th
- Public Comment at Public Board of Education Meetings on safe transition plan at both the February 22nd and March Board of Education meetings
- February 25, 2021: Email to community to invite any and all community to be part of stakeholder meeting to discuss and consider full day reopening
- March 4, 2021: Staff and Community Stakeholder Meeting held
- June 14: Public Comment regarding the Safe Reopening Plan at Board of Education meeting
- June 21: Survey to parents regarding feedback on the District's pandemic response for 2020-2021 school year as well as feedback about the District's Safe Reopening Plan

- August 2021: Public BOE Meeting regarding Safe Reopening Plan Presentation with discussion of the Governor’s Mask Mandate released on August 6, 2021
- October 25, 2021: Public BOE Meeting with presentation on: Updated Virtual Supports, Cafeteria Changes to avoid close contacts, Use of ESSR Funding
- Daily positive case chart updated and kept on website

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 post the Safe Reopening Plan Template to the website to allow for easy access. Administrators will be readily available to answer any questions regarding the plan. Additionally, a frequently asked question document is also available on the website and updated as needed. Finally, upon request, any parent with an individual disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided with an alternative format.

