



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: Millstone Township Schools

Date (11/10/2021):

Date Revised (11/10/2021):

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 district has adopted nursing protocols which must be adhered to by all students, staff, and visitors while executive orders mandating masks remain in place. As part of the nursing protocols, masks must cover both the nose and mouth. Multilayer cloth masks are preferred and strongly encouraged. Face shields and neck buffs are not acceptable face covers by themselves. Masks are always required for staff when students/other staff are present. Masks are always required for students while they are in the building and on buses except during socially distant mask breaks and while eating/drinking. Anyone requesting a medical exemption for wearing a mask must present specific medical documentation with details regarding the medical diagnosis and contraindicating conditions. Medical exemption decisions will be made in collaboration with the school district physician and the prescribing doctor. These requirements are memorialized in District Policy 1648.11: Restart and Recovery Plan. These requirements are subject to change depending on state executive orders and guidance from the Department of Education.
- B. **Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding):** All classrooms and shared spaces are socially distant to the greatest extent possible. Student desks, tables, and other related seating are arranged at least three feet apart to the greatest extent possible. If/when three feet of distance is not attainable between students, partitions may be placed between individuals. During meals, students are seated six feet apart to the greatest extent possible. Additional tables and dining areas will be utilized to increase physical space between students.

- C. **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:** In many classrooms there are existing handwashing stations prepared with soap. In their absence, alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) are provided. Students are reminded orally and through posted signage to wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. Students are also encouraged to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible. Prior to lunch and after recess periods, students are provided time and reminders to wash their hands. In addition, signage is posted around the buildings and in restrooms to provide hygiene advice and reminders.
- D. **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:** – The district adheres to current and updated CDC and Department of Health facilities cleaning practices and procedures which are frequently updated as changes arise. The district follows established cleaning/disinfecting schedules which identifies the targeted areas to be cleaned and methods and materials to be used. The district has a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are frequently touched. All cleaning products are EPA-registered and approved and each is utilized according to the directions on the label or as listed in the manufacturer’s instructions. All schools throughout the district have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air is complemented with a fresh air component and windows are opened when recirculated air is not provided. Filters for all HVAC units are maintained and changed according to, or more frequently than, manufacturer recommendations. When weather allows, windows are opened to allow for greater air circulation. Circulation of outdoor air is increased as much as possible, by opening windows and doors and using HVAC systems fresh air components.
- E. **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments:** The district conducts contact tracing and enforces isolation and quarantine according to the most up-to-date Department of Health guidance to the greatest extent possible acknowledging that these practices involve participation, cooperation, and transparency from members of the public.
- F. **F. Diagnostic and screening testing:** The district provides families with information regarding diagnostic and screening testing and encourages families to get tested as appropriate. The district nursing plan also mandates COVID-19 testing and/or doctor’s visit when students present with two or more symptoms that are compatible with COVID-19 symptoms and/or if students miss more than two days of school for illness.
- G. **G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible:** The district has partnered with a local hospital and the Monmouth County Health Department to provide multiple opportunities for staff, students, and families to receive vaccinations. The district will continue to make opportunities available as often as possible within this partnership.

- H. **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies:** The district continues to follow Department of Education guidelines, state laws and regulations, and federal requirements for students with disabilities. All accommodation and modifications are implemented to the greatest extent possible regardless of the modality of instruction employed, i.e., virtual, in-person, or hybrid.

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 continues to meet its obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible regardless of the mode of instruction, i.e. in-person, virtual, or hybrid. Case managers, teachers, and support staff continue to implement modifications and accommodations as prescribed by each individual student's IEP, guidance from the NJDOE, and any/all additional guidance from the United States Department of Education (USDE) on implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The district has ensured that every student has access to a computing device and internet connectivity and all known issues among our student body have been remedied. The district has a full staff committed to delivering the curriculum and administering assessments as appropriate. All schools have building staff capacity to deliver highly effective instruction in virtual, in-person, and hybrid environments. The staff is also prepared to address learning gaps that might prevent students from meeting grade-level New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) over the summer and upon the return to schools in the fall. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, the district has provided an abundance of professional learning to equip leaders, staff, substitutes, students, and parents/caregivers for altered educational environments and experiences. In addition, the district is participating in a free breakfast and lunch program and making meals available to all families on a daily basis.

. 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 presented its Safe Reopening Plan at its public Board of Education meeting on June 14, 2021, where public comment is allowed and encouraged, and the plan is continuously available to the public on the district 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 utilized the NJDOE-recommended form to create its Safe Reopening Plan to ensure uniformity with format. The plan has been written in English only as the district does not have a significant population of English learners. Oral assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis to families who require translation and/or further clarification. In addition, the plan will be provided in an alternate format to accommodate anyone who so needs based on an ADA-defined disability.