



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: Stow Creek Township School District 11-5070

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/09/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/22/2022

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
Effective March 7, 2022, in conjunction with Governor Murphy lifting the school wide mask mandate, the district will also lift the mask mandate. The district reserves the right to mandate masks at any time.

- B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)
The district will follow the guidance released by the NJDOH when it comes to physical distancing. As the guidance from the NJDOH changes, we will modify our physical distancing procedures to follow their guidance.

- C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
Automatic Hand Sanitizing Stations - Alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) In each classroom (Students under 5 years of age must be supervised when using hand sanitizer), near entrances and exits of the buildings, near cafeteria, and near restrooms. Hand sanitizer should be used when hands are not visibly soiled and hand washing is not feasible at that time. Hand Washing Procedures: Students will wash hands for at least 20 seconds multiple times throughout the day. Before eating, after using the restroom, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing, and as needed throughout the day. As the guidance from the NJDOH changes, we will modify our handwashing and respiratory procedures to follow their guidance.

Students will be instructed by classroom teachers, nurse and Health teacher on proper respiratory etiquette including coughing and sneezing into their elbow, proper use of tissues, and the importance of handwashing/sanitizing immediately following.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The district will follow the guidance released by the NJDOH when it comes to maintaining healthy facilities. As the guidance from the NJDOH changes, we will modify our practices and procedures to follow their guidance. Custodians will clean high touch areas multiple times per day. Custodians will use EPA approved cleaning chemicals and will utilize the use of electrostatic sprayers in the classrooms (desks, manipulatives), cafeteria, playgrounds and play equipment, physical education equipment, and school buses.

Indoor air quality will be monitored frequently to ensure proper ventilation and airflow. HVAC systems will be installed, repaired, or replaced on an as needed basis.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
School administration and nurses will work with the county and state health departments to identify those who have come into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

The district will alert the staff and the parents in the classroom in which a positive individual has been identified. No quarantine is required at this time. As the guidance from the NJDOH changes, we will modify our contact tracing and quarantine procedures to follow their guidance.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The district will follow the guidance released by the NJDOH when it comes to diagnostic and screening staff, students and visitors. All staff, students and visitors will be asked to perform a self-assessment before entering the building. Anyone with a temperature greater than or equal to 100-degrees will be excluded from school. Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff: The district will follow the guidance set forth by the NJDOH when it comes to excluding students and staff from school. The district will be in contact with county health officials to report any COVID-19 outbreaks in the district. Common Symptoms of COVID-19 (may be excluded from school)

As the guidance from the NJDOH changes, we will modify our diagnostic and screening testing procedures to follow their guidance.

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

The district will continue to distribute NJDOH vaccine information through global calls, emails and the district website. The Morris Goodwin School has partnered with the NJDOH in the past to hold vaccine clinics in the building.

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

The district's educational program will return with minimal changes. Students and staff will return to school for full time, 5 days per week instruction. Students with Individualized Educational Plans and/or 504 Plans will be provided with instruction that meets their individual needs. If additional services are warranted the district will take the necessary steps to ensure that such services are incorporated into the student's plan of instruction.

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).

Professional development will be planned to support the mental wellbeing; The district will focus on creating a safe, comfortable environment when school starts; Teachers will evaluate students in the fall to assist in guiding instruction; Basic skills teachers will work with students to build upon previous learning; Continue to provide after school tutoring for students identified as at risk; Continue to offer Health, Mental Health and outside Counseling resources to families; The district will distribute health and wellness information as it becomes available to the district; Staff members will be encouraged to act as mentors to a few students; Continue to collaborate with families about the academic progress of their children.

The district will encourage the school counselor to attend professional development, with a focus on mental health, throughout the school year. As the district learns of professional development opportunities recommended by the NJDOE, they will distribute that information to the guidance and teaching staff. The district will incorporate social emotional learning into the classroom, having teachers model desired behavior.

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 sought public comment by encouraging teachers and BOE members to contribute in the creation of this plan ahead of the June 9th BOE meeting. This plan was created, in part, by using the information found in the district's restart and recovery plan that was developed in 2020. At the June 9, 2021 BOE meeting, the district sought public comment from the public and revised the plan based upon the comments that were heard. The staff was given a chance to comment on the plan on September 1, 2022. The plan was re-adopted on January 5, 2022, 2/24/22, 9/22/22, 12/15/22 and 6/15/23.

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 created the plan by using the template provided by the NJDOE using public comments from the district's Restart and Recovery Plan, feedback from staff, Board of Education members and through public participation at BOE meetings. If a parent requires a written or oral translation, they should contact the school. If a parent who has a disability as defined by the ADA requests this document in an alternative format, the district will accommodate that parent. This document will be posted to the school district's website and will be updated as the information changes.