



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-19-19-19 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-19-19-19 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-19-19-19 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: Middlesex County Magnet Schools

Date (6/21/2023):

Date Revised (6/1/2023):

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

Middlesex County Magnet Schools (District) will make wearing of masks for students and staff optional for the 2022-2023 school year. We will respect the decision on their choice to wear a mask and will continue to educate the school community on how viruses spread. However, the district will pivot on this decision if the Governor and/or Department of Health mandates wearing of masks in schools.

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

The district will revert back to normal distancing for the 2022-2023 school year. It is not feasible to maintain physical distancing in all academic classrooms and also in our cafeterias. We will continue to have desks face the same direction where it is feasible. However, the district will pivot on this decision if the Governor and/or Department of Health mandates physical distancing in schools.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The district will continue promoting proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette for the 2022-2023 school year. The district will make hand sanitizing stations available in high traffic areas, but will not require classrooms to be disinfected after every class. The school nurse will assist in educating the students on proper techniques to ensure the health and safety of all students.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The district, with assistance of the district architectural firm, contracted an environmental engineer who will complete a study of the district ventilation system. The study will determine which areas need improvement and remedy those areas. This will be a multi-step process that will help confirm our ventilation rate, increase air efficiency and add ultraviolet lighting where possible. The result of this will improve the air quality for all students and staff. Several units in the district have already been replaced and/or in process of being upgraded.

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

The district will only exclude and quarantine students and staff who test positive for Covid-19. The district will not contact trace and isolate students/staff who have been exposed to Covid-19. However, the district will pivot on this decision if the Governor and/or Department of Health mandates this for schools.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The district will not conduct daily health screenings or temperature checks. However, the district will pivot on this decision if the Governor and/or Department of Health mandates this for schools.

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

The district will work with the county and local health department to make the Covid-19 vaccine available to the entire school community. We will continue to educate the school community on the effectiveness of vaccines and encourage all to get vaccinated.

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

The district Supervisor of Special Education will continue working with school Principals and Child Study Team members to ensure all modifications are being met and to also increase services, if needed.

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)

- High School Independent Study Teacher-works directly with students who are eligible and authorized for alternative instruction outside of the regular classroom setting.
- Summer enrichment in the areas of English and Mathematics.
- Response to Intervention Strategies
- Professional Development will be offered to certificated staff members during the school year. The goals are to: equip staff with tools to help support a smooth transition back to brick and mortar programming for students and ensure staff are able to recognize and intervene when a student is exhibiting signs of crisis.
- MCVTS will use a contract provider to train school counselors and child study team case managers on how to support the mental health and SEL needs of students.
- The district added a social worker to work with the district to help support all students who are in need.

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 sent out a parent survey to the entire school population. Each question was taken directly from the safe return plan to gain an accurate account of what the public's opinion was for each of the questions in the survey. The district was sensitive to all opinions and made the decision based on what was best for the entire district. To accurately understand each campus' population, the survey was broken down by campus, and the district compiled all the results to make an informed decision based on public input. We learned last year that we must be flexible with our plans. The district developed a safe schools committee consisting of administrators, teachers, parents and students. The committee will meet quarterly and will request public input on our plans after each meeting.

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 make the plan available on our website. For parents with limited English proficiency, the plan will be posted in both English and Spanish. The district will translate the plan to other languages at the request of the parent. In order to ensure the understanding of the plan, the district will include a presentation using images and audio recordings to further reinforce the reopening plan. All other reasonable requests for clarity of the plan will be honored by the district.