



## 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 the 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 30, 2023.** The NJDOE intends to make LEA ARP ESSER Fund applications available in EWEG on June 30, 2023 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 30, 2023. 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.

# Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

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LEA Name: Hopewell Valley Regional School District

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): June 9, 2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): June 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 (1000 characters max for each letter. This document needs to be copied into the EWEG application when completed)

HVRSD will follow State mandates and local health department and CDC guidelines regarding the use of masks for students, staff members, visitors and attendees in our school building, school transportation, and at school events should we return to the State of Emergency and/or health crisis. Exceptions to the indoor mask mandate for schools will be relaxed in times of excessive heat. HVRSD does not anticipate a need to relax masking as our HVAC systems should provide adequate cooling of classroom spaces. In the event that a classroom air-conditioning unit is not working, students will be relocated to an alternate location. Should mandatory masking return, staff, and students will be encouraged to take occasional mask breaks outside or with increased social distancing (e.g. 6 apart outdoors and 12 feet indoors) for intervals of 15 minutes or less. In the cases of extreme heat, masks are optional for students and staff when outside during the school day. Students are required to maintain social distancing when masks are removed outside.

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

HVRSD will follow social distancing guidelines to the maximum extent possible should we again enter a state of emergency and we are required by the NJDOE and the Governor's Office to return to strict COVID-19 protocols. Face coverings will be required for visitors and staff unless the State and our District health officials determine they are no longer necessary. HVRSD will continue to minimize the use of shared objects, ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students/staff are educated and encouraged to wash hands frequently. Classroom capacity will be limited to ensure at least 3 feet of spacing between students. Physical barriers, such as plexiglass, will be available in reception areas and employee workspaces where the environment does not provide for physical distancing of 3 or more feet apart, and congregating in shared spaces, such as staff lounge areas is discouraged. Visitors, including parents, will be discouraged from entering the school building unless attending approved events and/or scheduled meetings.

### C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Staff will be trained on healthy hygiene practices so they can instruct students on the proper hygiene protocols. These hand washing protocols include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used as an alternative. HVRSD staff will ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) are available to support healthy hygiene practices. The district will utilize the online platform GCN and require staff to complete training on the COVID-19 virus, symptoms, and hygiene protocols. Completion of required training will be monitored by the Human Resources Department.

### D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible. Shared objects should be limited or cleaned between uses. Students and staff will also be encouraged to wash and sanitize their hands during the usage of shared equipment. School bus drivers will practice safety protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, the use of cloth face coverings). Bus drivers and maintenance staff will clean and disinfect transport vehicles daily. HVRSD will continue to follow a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection after exposure to positive cases of COVID-19. HVRSD will also ensure the safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children. The district will use products that meet EPA disinfection guidelines.

HVRSD Facilities and Maintenance staff will ensure ventilation systems are operating properly and increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Windows may be opened, but they should not be opened if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

Should a State of Emergency arise again, maintenance of facilities cleanings will increase in alignment with outbreak locations.

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

All administrators and nurses have been trained in contact tracing protocols; though we are not contact tracing at this time we continue to report all cases we know of the out local and State Health Department agencies. HVRSD encourages students and staff with COVID-19-like symptoms to stay home, to test, and to mask for up to 10 days upon their return to school after a significant reduction in symptoms.

### F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Should a State of Emergency due to COVID-19 return, HVRSD will safely and respectfully screen students and employees for symptoms of and history of exposure to COVID-19. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. If the district

becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, we will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.

The policy for screening students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure will include the following:  
Staff must visually check students for symptoms upon arrival (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms. Health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.

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

To date, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District has hosted three vaccination clinics for students, staff, and community members. In addition, we partnered with Princeton Healthcare and Capital Health to provide vaccines for any staff member who wanted one. The district will continue to collaborate with local health care providers like Princeton Healthcare, local pharmacists, and hospitals to provide vaccination clinics for new vaccinations and boosters annually for staff.

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

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District provides a continuum of special education and related services to eligible students, including out-of-district programs, in-district self-contained classes, resource in-class, and pull-out replacement programs, general education programs with appropriate accommodations, related services, and home instruction. All programs and services are based on individual student needs as determined by each student's individualized education plan (IEP).

All HVRSD schools have an Intervention & Referral Services Team (I&RS) for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students learning behavior, or health needs. I&RS services are part of a larger district Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a framework of supports and interventions to improve student achievement.

#### I. Provisions for Meals

Should a State of Emergency due to COVID-19 return, the district will take a layered approach to ensure the safety of students and staff during lunches. These strategies include:

Social distancing in Cafeteria Spaces

Using alternative dining locations  
Increasing food distribution stations  
Staggering and/or limiting student movement through food distribution lines  
Providing outdoor dining options, weather permitting

## 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)

Our expectation for the 2023-2024 school year is for all students to return to in-person, full-day learning. In the absence of a State directive, remote learning will only be provided if there are significant, documented circumstances that require a remote learning accommodation. The [Remote Learning Plan](#) has been developed, Board Approved, and is posted on the district's website.

Our instructional program ensures all students receive the highest quality, equitable education. This is done through utilizing a variety of evidence-based practices designed to improve achievement and promote positive student outcomes. Utilizing a variety of assessment data, teams will continue to make data-driven decisions to support and accelerate student learning, when an opportunity gap is determined.

Feedback from various stakeholders suggests that COVID-19 will have significant psychological and emotional impacts on students. The district has established procedures for identifying students needing individualized mental health interventions. The district Behavioral Health Assessment Team (BHAT) will monitor at-risk student cases and design plans for intervention.

## 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)

Revisions to the plan were shared with the community and school board on June 20 and presented. Public comment regarding the plan will be taken under advisement and reviewed with our district health officials.

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practicable to write 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)

In addition to sharing the plan as a document (in translatable form) with families, the plan was also presented using a Powerpoint presentation at a public meeting. It is also posted on the district website. Revisions to this plan will also be posted and presented at public meetings.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (0 of 1000 maximum characters used)

Should a State of Emergency return due to Covid-19, the staff is scheduled to receive additional training in blended learning and supporting the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms. Additional professional learning opportunities and technical assistance opportunities will be provided during monthly department meetings, grade-level meetings, and faculty meetings. Parents will receive follow-up technical assistance sessions via online videos and during back-to-school nights to help them navigate our online learning platform and support their students. HVRSD also has a robust support program available online, via email, or on the phone.

D. Provide a current link to the district's website where the plan is posted

[Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service](#)