



## 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

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LEA Name: South Hackensack Public School District

Date: (06/18/2021)

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):

### 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

- Currently, face coverings for students are required at all times when in our school building. At the teachers discretion, students are given “mask breaks” when social distancing is possible. We acknowledge the fact that enforcing the use of face coverings might be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities. Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering are addressed according to that student’s need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Exceptions to requirements for face coverings include when doing so would inhibit the person’s health, the individual is in extreme heat outdoors, the individual is in water, the student’s documented medical condition or disability as reflected in an IEP precludes the use of face covering, or the student is under the age of two and could risk suffocation. Currently, face coverings are always required for all visitors and staff in the building unless it will inhibit the individual’s health or the individual is under two years of age. If a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and if such a covering cannot be provided to the individual at the point of entry, the visitor’s entry to the school/district facility may be denied. The Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery plan is available for view on our district website ([www.shmemorial.org](http://www.shmemorial.org)) under Reopening Plan Update. Sections of the plan that address universal and correct wearing of masks are sections A.1.a.(1)(d), A.1.b.(2) & (3), A.1.c.(1) & (2), A.1.d.(2), and A.1.e.(4); (5); (6) & (7). Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices A, B, C, D and E.

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

- All instructional and non-instructional rooms in our school district facility complies with recommended social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable. This was achieved by ensuring students are seated at least six feet apart. When a classroom or non-instructional room was not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications were implemented when possible, including having physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of a table, spaced apart appropriately. Our district provided physical markings (i.e., tape on floors/sidewalks, signs on walls) to help ensure that staff and students remain socially distanced in lines and at other times. When possible, hall monitors were stationed near restrooms to enforce social distancing in the bathroom and in the hallway. In the event that lunch/ snack had to be provided indoors, students maintained social distancing, remained seated at desk with a desk shield. Face coverings are put on immediately after snack/lunch is consumed. All instructional and non-instructional rooms in our school district facility complies with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable. Students remain in their class groups (homerooms) during outdoor recess to avoid intermingling with other classes during the school day. If two or more groups are participating in recess at the same time, there is at least six feet of open space between the two groups. Our district's plan adhered to all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocols during any extra-curricular activities. Students in grades PreK-8 in general education classrooms were divided into cohorts attending in-person instruction on alternate days to maintain social distancing. Faculty and staff adhere to social distancing guidelines when using faculty/staff common areas (faculty room). Faculty and staff may leave the building during their lunch hour provided they check out and back in with the building administrator/main office. A plexiglass barrier was installed and used due to consideration as a high traffic area such as main office. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 are safely and respectfully isolated from others. School officials follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. Methods to assist in contact tracing include records of groups, cohorts, assigned staff and daily attendance. Sections of the plan that address physical distancing are sections A.1.b.(1); (2); (3). & (4), A 1. D. (2) & (3), A.1.e. (2) (a) & (c) (iv), A.1.h. (1)(a) & (d), A.1.i.(1)(b) & (3), and A.1.j.(1). Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices B, D, E, H, I and J.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The district promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; requiring the use of face coverings; and signs and messages in and around school buildings. Handwashing and hand sanitizing are permitted and encouraged throughout the school day. Our school prepared and maintains hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol). Such stations are located: in each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer); at entrances and exits of buildings; near the lunchroom and toilets; children ages five and younger are supervised when using hand sanitizer; for classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations are prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol). School officials developed a school-wide plan where students are required to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing (or washing with an alcohol-based sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol). People are also required to wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items. There is also the requirement that all individuals always wash/sanitize hands immediately after outdoor playtime. The district's plan also adheres to all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocols during any extra-curricular activities. Sections of the plan that address handwashing and respiratory etiquette are sections A.1.a.(1)(d), A.1.b.(7) & (8), A.1.h.(1)(e), A.1.i.(1)(d), and A.1.j.(1). Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices A, B, H, I, and J

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

- The South Hackensack School District maintains an adequate supply of cleaning supplies, including hand sanitizers, gloves, and face coverings to allow for a two-month supply. We continue to monitor the CDC's guidance on cleaning and disinfecting. The South Hackensack School District has instituted regular housekeeping practices, which include cleaning and disinfecting frequently used rooms and equipment, and other elements of the district work environment, where possible. Employees regularly do the same in their personal work areas. The staff disinfects during the school day for touchpoints, including but not limited to door handles, light switches, physical education equipment, classroom entranceways/transom hallway/stairwell banisters and handrails, restroom flushing handles and sink handles, and desk surfaces. Staff disinfect classrooms, isolation areas, and nurses' offices frequently during the day. Staff wipe down any items that may be shared among students with appropriate sanitizing wipes or disinfecting spray. Proper dwell times as per product guidelines are maintained. When possible and needed, an additional custodian can be scheduled. Each classroom is provided with appropriate disinfecting materials so that desks can be sanitized between classes where needed (when one group of students is leaving and another one is entering). Appropriate disinfecting materials are provided for each classroom so that desks can be sanitized after eating. All surfaces are cleaned when the school day has concluded using soap or cleaning solution followed by sanitizer. A spray or sanitizing disinfectant is used throughout the building when the school day has concluded. It is administered using an atomizer and given the proper dwell time as recommended by the manufacturer. Outdoor playground equipment is also sanitized. Custodial and maintenance staff are trained on the proper cleaning and sanitizing procedures, and faculty and staff are notified about cleaning and

sanitizing procedures. All outside damper units regularly circulate in outside air at a minimum of 10%. They are adjusted depending on outside conditions. All HVAC systems are controlled remotely to ensure proper ventilation and air exchange. The district has a preventative maintenance plan in place for all equipment. It is updated to include additional tasks for more frequent cleaning of the interior of HVAC materials. The district follows the manufacturer's recommendations for the replacement of unit air filters. The district installed MERV-13 air filters in all classroom air handler units. High touch areas of HVAC and other building service systems are disinfected regularly. The interior of refrigerated devices (where the virus can potentially survive for longer periods of time) are disinfected regularly. Desks are cleaned after each snack or lunch use with disinfecting materials appropriate for sanitization for any food allergies. Disinfecting materials are stored in the classroom and staff on duty are notified about the cleaning procedures. All water fountains are currently closed for the health and safety of students. Parents/guardians are encouraged to send their child with bottled water. Locker rooms are closed to mitigate risk and prohibit students and staff from confined spaces with limited ventilation and/or areas with large amounts of high contact surfaces. The school district mitigates risk, limits and/or eliminates direct contact with equipment (lessons with no equipment) and does not allow sharing of equipment. If equipment must be shared, the equipment is cleaned and disinfected between each use. Sections of the plan that address cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation, are sections A.1.c.(3), A.1.g, A.1.h.(1)(a) & (c), A.1.i.(1)(c) & (g)(i), A.1.i.(2), and A.1.i.(3). Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices C, G, H, and I.

- E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
- Procedures for symptomatic staff and students include that staff and students with symptoms related to COVID-19 are safely and respectfully isolated from others. School officials follow Communicable Disease Service guidelines for illness reporting. If the school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, school officials immediately notify the local health officials, staff and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. The procedure the district uses when someone tests positive includes the establishment of an isolation space. Students remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult. The district follows current Communicable Disease Service guidelines for illness reporting. An adequate amount of PPE is available, accessible, and provided for use. Methods to assist in contact tracing include records of group/cohorts, assigned staff, and daily attendance. Re-admittance policies are consistent with Bergen County Department of Health guidance and information for schools and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Services Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19. The district also engages the expertise of the school nurse on the importance of contact tracing. Our school has a Pandemic Response Team which is responsible for the school's implementation of the plan, particularly health and safety measures. Sections of the plan that address contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine are sections A.1.c., A.1. f, and B.2. g. Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices E, F, and M.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- The school district adopted Board policy regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure. Screening procedures include the following: staff must visually check students for symptoms upon arrival (which includes temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students were free of COVID-19 symptoms; health checks must 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; any screening policy/protocol must take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students. School officials have encouraged parents to be alert for signs of the illness in their children and to keep their child home when they are sick. Sections of the plan that address diagnostic and screening testing are A.1.d. (1) and A.1.e. Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that address this topic are appendices D and E.

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

- Most educators and staff members voluntarily made vaccination appointments and were vaccinated. In conjunction with the Bergen County Department of Health, staff members who were not yet vaccinated had the opportunity to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Paramus. The staff members who notified administration were given the appointments to be vaccinated within the two offerings through the Bergen County Department of Health. The district also distributed all health notices, including notices of locations offering vaccinations. Students who are eligible for vaccines are already making their own appointments and getting vaccinated.

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

- Reasonable accommodations were provided for individuals that the CDC identified as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 such as medically fragile students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students with complex disabilities with IEPs or students who require accommodations under a Plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan). Accommodations were also made for those younger students or individuals with disabilities who could not wear a face covering and addressed according to a student's particular need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. An exception to the requirement for a face covering was also made if a student had a documented medical condition or disability as reflected in an IEP that precluded the use of a face covering. Any screening process/protocol considered students with disabilities and accommodations that were needed in the screening process for those students. Social and emotional supports were also provided as needed. Likewise, the Restart & Recovery committee reflected the diversity of the school community, including those representing students with disabilities. Sections of the plan that address appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies are sections A.1.a.(1)(e), A.1.b.(2)(a), A.1.c.(1) & (2), A.1.e.(1)(d), A.1.e.(5), A.1.e.(6)(d), A.2 and B.1.d. Appendices of the Fall 2020 Restart & Recovery Plan that addresses this topic are appendices A, B, C, E, K, and L.

## 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 has identified certain needs that will be funded by the CRRSA-ESSER II Grant that will provide a continuation of services for students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2021-2022 school year, the district is planning to partner with CarePlus School based program to offer services including counseling, care coordination, school clearance assessments and access to CarePlus' full continuum of integrated care and social support services for students and families. The district is also planning to increase its' social/emotional instruction by adding SEL literature into the classroom and class libraries in grades PreK-5. Additionally, our district is planning to increase social/emotional learning in the middle school grades by implementing a social/emotional learning period in grades 5-8 once a week. This will include the purchase of a social emotional program tailored to grades 5-8. Social-emotional learning will be a key factor in student success. The district is budgeting for SEL training for professional staff to strengthen SEL, promote SEL for students, and to develop a plan for addressing the emotional fallout of the trauma of COVID-19. In order to prepare for the anticipated gaps in learning, the district is also planning to purchase additional technology resources/programs to assist in individualized learning. We are planning to expand our Extended Curriculum Program for access and time so teachers will the opportunity to work with small groups of students to address specific needs in English Language Arts and Math. A summer learning academy program is planned in English Language Arts and Math during the summer of 2021. All students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-2022 school year. After care will also be offered for our students. Finally, the district will continue to support any PPE and building supplies needed to continue to offer the level of care needed to support the health and safety of students and staff.

## 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 Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services template will be approved by the South Hackensack Board of Education at the June 28, 2021 Board meeting. In seeking public comment on its plan, the district sent out a community survey asking for input into the development of its plan. Also, the district Restart and Recovery Committee will review this template and the ARP Mandatory Subgrant Award for revisions as required by the ARP Mandatory Subgrant Award. Public comment will be solicited as required by the subgrant award.

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 School Restart and Recovery Plan is published on the district website at [www.shmemorial.org](http://www.shmemorial.org) and the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services will be posted there as well. For those members of the public whose first language is not English, the website has the ability to translate text into many different languages. The text of the Restart and Recovery Plan is understandable and follows a clear format, making it easy for people to access the area they wish. Upon request and if necessary, an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act will be provided information in an alternative format that is accessible for that parent or guardian.