



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: Morris County Vocational School District

Date (06/08/2021); (BOE Approved on **07/13/2021**)

Date Revised (6/13/23);(11/23/2022); (8/12/2021):

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 will update the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction plan to reflect the State, county, and local guidelines for masking. Even if State, county, and local guidelines do not require masking, staff and students will be allowed to wear masks if they feel more comfortable doing so.

If the State of New Jersey mandates mask-wearing during the 2023-24 school year, then the Morris County Vocational School District will require students, staff, and visitors to school property to wear CDC-approved masks over their mouths and noses. The district will remind all staff, students, and visitors of proper mask-wearing requirements. Students will not wear masks during lunch periods. The district will provide plexiglass barriers between students to disrupt aerosol transmission if necessary.

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

If the State of New Jersey allows for three-foot distancing between individuals within schools, MCVSD will implement a three-foot physical distancing protocol. This protocol enables the district to remove cohorts and provide full-time in-person instruction. Using a three-foot physical distancing protocol will allow us to accommodate students in common areas and hallways safely. The district will also be able to implement safe lunch periods using plexiglass dividers.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

During the 2020-2021 school year, the district implemented a handwashing/sanitizing and respiratory etiquette protocol that proved successful in preventing the spread of Covid-19. The school district will continue to provide hand sanitizer in all classrooms, near all door entrances and exits, lunchrooms, and bathrooms. Staff will continue to remind students to wash their hands frequently. We will continue the respiratory etiquette protocol of keeping mouths and noses covered when on the school premises if face coverings are required. If State, county, and local guidance surrounding handwashing and respiratory etiquette should change, the district will implement different protocols following those guidelines.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The district maintains filters for HVAC units and changes them according to manufacturer standards, stipulating that filters are changed at least twice a year and checked once a month, and changed as needed. Additionally, HVAC systems are upgraded with UV lights for anti-viral capabilities. An EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2 is used for daily disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often.

Several spaces within the campus have air filtration systems.

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

If the State of New Jersey requires it, the school district will continue to implement contact tracing protocols upon being informed of a positive case of COVID-19 among students or staff. The school district will continue to work closely and communicate with sending districts to provide the respective health departments with information about each case.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

If the State of New Jersey requires it, the district will continue to have staff and students complete daily self-screening attestation forms. If a staff member or student exhibits signs and symptoms of COVID-19, the district will consult with the local health department to determine the next steps required to protect the health and safety of the community and if a COVID test is required for the symptomatic individual to re-enter the school.

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

The district currently coordinates with Atlantic Health to provide vaccine information and access to all staff and students. Since we are a high school district, all students qualify for the vaccine based on age. Therefore, we will continue to encourage and facilitate vaccination for all students and staff.

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

For any student or staff members requiring accommodations linked to health and safety measures, the district will work with every individual to determine an action plan based on the individual's specific needs.

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 will continue to provide academic credit recovery, learning enrichment, and support services throughout the school year with teachers benchmarking students' progress in meeting the NJSL learning objectives.

The district recognizes the toll this pandemic has taken on the community's (students, parents, and staff) mental and emotional health. Concerns exist regarding the transition to "normalcy". As a result, we plan to contract with providers such as Challenge Success and Tri-County Behavioral Care to provide a host of support and mental health services to students, parents, and staff.

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)

The district sent a Genesis blast of the plan to all staff, students, and families with a survey form asking for comments. The district also posted the plan on the website and invited comments through a survey link.

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 follow requirements for ADA compliance with the website and posted communication. The plan, posted on the website, can be translatable into any language. The Genesis blast communication was in Spanish and English.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities. The LEA will make available to its schools. (391 of 1000 maximum characters used)

The MCVSD will use the following professional development and training tools for faculty and staff: (1) Tri-County Behavioral Services for Mental Health training and services; (2) Challenge Success to collect data and create action plans and professional development based on the needs assessment; and (3) Myron Dueck will train faculty on differentiation, assessment practices, and grading.