



## 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: Shawn Heeter

Date (06/15/2021):

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 -

**If face coverings are mandated by the NJDOE for staff and students, the following protocols will be in place:**

**Face masks will be provided to all parties.**

**All staff and students wear face masks in accordance with NJDOE mandate.**

**Accommodations will be made, as needed, for students who are unable to wear face masks.**

**School visitors will be required to wear face masks. Refusal to do so will result in entry being denied.**

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

**Reduced class sizes and a new bell schedule will be utilized to maximize social distancing. Student desks will be placed a minimum of 4 feet apart with at least a 4 foot buffer at the front of the classroom and near classroom doorways. Daily class schedule is being adjusted to accommodate the need for an extra lunch period so that students can maintain appropriate distance in the cafeteria.**

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

**Students and staff should wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before and after eating, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing, and before and after using shared objects. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be readily available in all classrooms and throughout the hallways and other high traffic areas. Staff and students will be reminded of respiratory etiquette, such as covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, throwing used tissues away, sneezing into elbows, and the importance of washing hands whenever sneezing, coughing, or touching face.**

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

**The building will be routinely cleaned throughout the day by the custodial staff. Commonly touched surfaces will be wiped down with disinfectant while students are present. In the evening, Educational Facilities Management will routinely clean and disinfect the building. EPA approved disinfectants will be used. Additionally, staff will have access to bottles of disinfectant to also clean commonly shared areas. Ventilation systems will be maintained and regularly cleaned. Improved air purifiers were installed to HVAC units. Windows will be opened, when practical. Outdoor class space is available.**

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

**Policy 5141.2 on Illness, more specifically the "Contact Tracing" section will be enforced. Contact tracing procedures will adhere to applicable federal and state law and regulations. We will continue to consult with local health officials, as needed. Staff and students testing positive for COVID-19 will quarantine in accordance with CDC recommendations. Any close contacts will be notified of their possible exposure, recommended for testing, and monitored for COVID-19 symptoms. The school nurse and Lead Person will collaborate with families and the local health department.**

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

**Policy 5141.3, Health Examinations and Immunizations, will be followed and enforced. Parents will be encouraged to keep sick students home. Any student or staff with COVID-19 symptoms while in session will be isolated. Students in isolation while at school will remain supervised until picked up by an authorized adult. COVID-19 tests are recommended for anyone showing symptoms with a negative test or appropriate quarantine period required before returning to school.**

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

**We will continue to work collaboratively with the Monmouth County Department of Health to provide families with vaccination information.**

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

**Consistent with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, we will continue to meet obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. Related services and counseling will be scheduled in consultation with families and each practitioner on an individual basis. Frequent check-ins with students and parents will be conducted for students that require modifications and accommodations. IEP, 504 & I&RS teams will continue to review student data and progress. All required meetings will be held.**

## 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)

### **SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & MENTAL HEALTH**

The health and safety of the staff and students remains a priority at ACHS. We will develop a positive culture and climate through:

- Including SEL Curriculum in each Elective.
- Continuation of our Mentoring program so that students and staff have time to rebuild relationships.
  - Activities focused on SEL will be part of the Mentoring program
- Continuation of the current PBIS system that rewards student growth and positive behaviors. We will adapt and modify this program to best meet our needs as we transition back to In-Person Learning.

COVID-19 will have significant psychological and emotional impacts on students. Necessary supports are in place and readily available for all students to manage these stressors as they strive to meet their academic goals. It is important to acknowledge the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the COVID-19 school closures.. In addition, students and staff returning to school will be faced with new and intimidating routines and circumstances. We must address these challenges head-on to ensure that social and emotional learning are infused into everyday school life.

Additional focus will be given to:

- Establishing routines and maintaining clear communication;
- Prioritizing relationships and well-being over assignment and behavioral compliance, and

- Supporting students and staff in feeling safe, connected, and hopeful.

**Other Actions Include:**

- The Lead Person, Director of Special Services and Social Worker will continue to make deliberate efforts to communicate the importance of SEL and how it relates to student success in your school or district to students and families.
- Necessary staff and resources will be available to address social-emotional or trauma related concerns as ACHS becomes aware of changing needs.

**SPECIAL & ACADEMIC SERVICES**

In accordance with the federal Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)) and New Jersey state special education regulations, all students with disabilities will receive appropriate special education related services, accommodations, and modifications to instruction as outlined in their IEPs. This includes speech-language services, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling.

**FOOD SERVICES**

Academy Charter will continue with regular food service to ensure that all students are properly fed. Students will have access to breakfast and lunch. Meals will be pre-packaged. Additional meals will be provided to students should there be a need for virtual learning.

**HEALTH SERVICES**

Academy Charter High School will continue to coordinate referrals to government agencies such as the NJ Department of Children and Families and the Department of Human Services as concerns about a student's safety, well-being and health are recognized by staff or communicated by the student. ACHS will maintain lists of resources for families seeking access to healthcare programs, such as NJ Family Care, NJSNAP, NJHelps, Federally Qualifying Health Clinics, and dental clinics. In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year, districts should reinforce and adjust screening processes to identify students who may have had unaddressed health or dental needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The school nurse will screen students



### 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 plan was reviewed and discussed at our public Board of Trustees meeting on June, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.**

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)