



## 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: High Bridge School District**

**Date (5/28/2021):**

**Date Revised (6/7/2021):**

### **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:

High Bridge School District will follow federal and state guidelines. Currently all staff and students must wear masks indoors. Students do not have to wear masks with exercise during recess while being socially distant. The district goal will be to return to a mask free environment when the CDC and State Health Department indicate it is safe to do so.

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

High Bridge School District will follow federal and state guidelines. Currently students are at three foot separation between desks while wearing masks. The district goal will be to return to traditional classroom size and student spacing when the CDC and State Health Department indicate it is safe to do so.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

High Bridge School District will continue to encourage staff and students to wash their hands often and cover when coughing or sneezing. We will also continue to provide hand sanitizer in each classroom as well as strategic areas around the building. Signs are posted around the building to remind students of proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

High Bridge School District will continue to provide custodial staff with tools to ensure an exceptional level of cleanliness. The district purchased green cleaning supplies as well as two UV machines to sanitize individual areas. Custodial staff will replace the filters in all uni-ventilators during the summer of 2021 and once again in the winter of 2021 (district upgraded filters from 8 to 11 MERV, rooftop MERV 13). Custodial staff will open windows to provide the maximum amount of air circulation.

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

School nurses will continue to work with state and local health departments to conduct contact tracing of potential infected students or staff. Staff and students will be isolated and quarantined according to symptoms and potential exposure. Staff and students will be directed to stay home when feeling sick.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

High Bridge School District will continue to follow federal and state guidelines when it comes to diagnostic and screening testing. Staff or students who are suspected of being infected with COVID-19 will be quarantined as per guidelines. Any non-vaccinated staff or student who travels outside the state for non-essential travel will follow current quarantined guidelines.

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

Hunterdon County Superintendent's coordinated with Hunterdon County Health Services to provide vaccinations to staff. Staff was provided with coverage and release time in order to get vaccinated. We will continue to push out information for vaccination opportunities for staff and students.

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

Students with disabilities will continue to receive accommodations as per their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

## **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 High Bridge School District has created social and academic programs for students starting the summer of 2021 and continuing through the fall and winter of the 21-22 school year. Our guidance counselors have developed a three year plan to support student's social, emotional and mental health needs. We worked with our school food provider to ensure lunches and snacks are available to all students regardless of economic need. We partnered with a local district to serve as a collection point for student summer meals. High Bridge has hired a summer meal coordinator to support families.

### **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)

Parents and community members will have the opportunity for input and question at our June 7<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting. We will have a separate section on the agenda dedicated to safe return to in-person instruction.

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 post this plan on our website site in English and Spanish. We will provide an alternate format upon request for anyone with a disability.