



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: Hanover Township

Date: 6/15/2021

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

The Hanover Township School District’s plan for universal and correct wearing of masks will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor’s Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. As of the submission of this plan, guidelines require universal wearing of masks in schools. If these guidelines continue for the 2021-22 school year, we will continue to implement them as outlined below and abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, we will adjust our policies and practices accordingly.

- Currently, all students and staff will continue to wear masks for the duration of their time in school and on buses, with the exception of mask breaks, while eating food, during extreme heat indoors, or when the mask adversely effects an individual’s health in accordance with CDC and NJDOH guidelines. Face coverings can also be removed while students are seated at desks and in classroom settings where social distancing can take place (e.g. desks are 6 feet apart) and physical barriers are present.

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

The Hanover Township School District’s plan for physical distancing will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor’s Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. Our District will abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local

circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, the District will adjust and update our policies and practices accordingly.

The District will continue to update and revise our guidelines if they change and our policies and practices will be updated accordingly.

- All students in the Hanover Township School District will be seated at a minimum of 3 ft. apart from each other in classrooms and in other instructional and non-instructional rooms to the maximum extent practicable.
- All students will be seated 6ft. apart from each other in lunchrooms while eating lunch.
- All students and staff in common areas, main offices, and teacher rooms will social distance, in accordance with CDC and NJDOH guidelines.

Social Distancing in Instructional and Non-Instructional Rooms –

Elementary Schools (BMS, MT, SDS): Desks, facing the same direction in classrooms will be separated based on current social distancing guidelines to the greatest extent possible. In addition, each student desk will be equipped with approved, clear, desk shields to provide a second layer of protection to students and staff. For those classrooms where tables are used, only two students will be seated on opposite sides of each table and a clear dividing barrier will be attached and/or placed on the table to provide a layer of protection to each student. In addition, a moveable teacher shield will be provided in all classroom settings.

Middle School (MJS): Desks, facing the same direction (traditional rows/columns), in classrooms students will be seated based on current social distancing guidelines to the greatest extent possible. In addition, a moveable teacher shield will be provided in all classroom settings. Teachers and additional staff will be monitoring student and staff passing time to ensure social distance guidelines are being followed.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette :

The Hanover Township School District’s plan for handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor’s Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. Our District will abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, the District will adjust and update our policies and practices accordingly. Signage supporting the requirements will appear throughout our buildings.

Procedures for Hand Sanitizing/Washing

Elementary Schools (BMS, MTV, SDS):

Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms in each of the elementary schools for student and faculty use. In addition, portable hand sanitizer stations will be strategically placed throughout each of the buildings, i.e., main entrances, outside restrooms, nurses office, etc.

Students will wash and/or disinfect hands in the classroom before and after eating snacks. If outdoor playtime is provided, students will wash hands after playtime, before returning to class. Students will wash hands after coughing or sneezing.

Middle School (MJS):

Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms throughout MJS for student and faculty use. In addition, portable hand sanitizer stations will be strategically placed throughout each of the buildings, i.e., main entrances, outside restrooms, nurses' office, etc. Students will be provided with hand sanitizer and will have opportunities to wash hands throughout the day. Students will wash hands after coughing or sneezing.

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

The Hanover Township School District's plan for cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor's Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. Our District will abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, the District will adjust and update our policies and practices accordingly. Signage supporting the requirements will appear throughout the building.

The District will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the Hanover Township Health Department as they arise. The schools will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our procedures manual with regard to cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and identify methods and materials to be used, etc. All protocols include but are not limited to:

- Routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- All HVAC units will continue to be cleaned and maintained along with scheduled filter replacements throughout the year.
- Use of all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available on the EPA's website.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.). Examples of frequently touched areas in schools are:
 - Classroom desks and chairs; Door handles and push plates; Handrails; Kitchens and bathrooms; Light switches; Handles on equipment; Drinking fountains; and School bus seats and windows.
- Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Best practices and recommendations will continue to be discussed in consultation with our local health department.

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

The Hanover Township School District’s plan for contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor’s Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. Our District will abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, the District will adjust and update our policies and practices accordingly.

Contact Tracing

District developed protocols and procedures regarding contract tracing have been developed in accordance to the guidance provided by New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. Additional information regarding contact can be found by clicking on the following link: [Communicable Disease Service Guidelines for Schools](#). The District will implement contact tracing procedures and policies created by the Hanover Township Health Department. The Hanover Township Health Department will lead the contact tracing efforts in partnership with our school nurses. Methods of assisting contact tracing will include the electronic recording of groups/cohorts (classes with assigned staff) through PowerSchool and daily attendance utilizing the same electronic platform. PowerSchool also features all student demographics and contact information in the event that contact tracing is warranted.

School Isolation Protocols:

Some students may develop symptoms of infectious illness while at school. The Hanover Township Public School District will take action to isolate those students from other students and staff.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

The Hanover Township School District’s plan for diagnostic and screening testing will be reflected by the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor’s Executive Orders, New Jersey Department of Health, Hanover Township Department of Health, and Department of Education that are in effect at the current time. Our District will abide by the recommendations of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. If guidelines are revised/amended, the District will adjust and update our policies and practices accordingly.

If a screening is required, it will take place at home on a daily basis and prior to the start of the school day via a self-screening/certification process. The district will be using a mobile application titled: “rSchoolToday.” Training Video for parents/staff-<https://rtvbroadcaster.com/archive/video/play/16753> It is crucial that staff screen themselves and parents screen their child before leaving for school. We do not want any of our students or staff traveling and/or entering our schools if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms below:

Fever greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius)

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Muscle aches

- Headache
- Chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- COVID Questionnaire - [Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Factsheet](#)

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

The District has partnered with Atlantic Health Systems, the local health department, and local pharmacies to provide assistance with vaccination appointments to eligible faculty and families. The district's plan for providing vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students if eligible will be determined in collaboration with our local health department.

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

Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability are addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

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)

Hanover Township has been committed to the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services as demonstrated by offering in-person instruction to ALL of our students throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year. We have done this in a consistent manner throughout the school year in consultation with our local health officials as evidenced by our gradual phase-in approach:

- Elementary Schools (BMS, MTV, SDS): Beginning September 2020, All students were permitted to attend school in-person, five days a week, on a modified schedule.
- Middle School (MJS):
 - Beginning September 2020, all students were permitted to attend school in-person, via a hybrid A/B cohort model, on a modified schedule.

- Beginning March/April 2021, all students were permitted to attend school in-person, five days a week, on a modified schedule.
- Self-contained classes: Beginning September 2020, all students in self-contained classes throughout the district were permitted to attend school in-person, full day, five days a week.

As per Governor Murphy, and in consultation with our local health officials, our in-person learning model will be expanded for the 2021-2022 school year by returning to our “traditional” full day, five day a week instructional model for all students. Virtual learning will not be an option at this time.

In addition, a multi-tiered systems of support and wrap-around services have been established to ensure that students receive academic and counseling support throughout the 2021-2022 school year, including the Extended School Year Program, after-school Math and LAL learning sessions (K-8), benchmarking and diagnostic assessments, i.e., IXL, etc.

Our counseling staff will continue to provide support to students individually, in small groups, or as a full class. In addition they will work with students to develop social skills, learn to navigate friendship groups, build healthy relationships, and deal with difficult or stressful experiences.

In addition we will provide crisis counseling through a partnership with Care Plus.

Social-emotional well-being for students and staff will continue to be our central focus as we re-engage our full learning community this fall. We will continue to implement the SEL-based curriculum centered around the six pillars of character, to all students K-8. Additionally, we will provide SEL-based professional development for staff, and we will continue to utilize student, parent, and staff surveys to drive our planning.

Social-emotional learning is woven into the fabric of our curriculum, professional development, and counseling practices. Students learn and practice mindful moments, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and social awareness with time allocated each day for the development of these competencies.

The Technology Department has established a screening process for identifying connectivity needs for students, and we will support families in need. All students in grades K-8 are issued a Chromebook by the district through our 1:1 program. Families of students who do not have a device at home will be identified by building principals and issued a district Chromebook.

Students identified as eligible for free and reduced meals are offered daily lunch at each school.

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 with the Hanover Township Department of Health, the Hanover Township Board of Education (via committee), and the Hanover Township Education Association. It was also included as an agenda item at the June 15th Board of Education meeting, at which time the public was invited to comment. The District has continued to engage the community throughout the pandemic through stakeholder committees, correspondence, surveys, meetings, etc. Revisions and updates to plan will be considered based on public comment/feedback as needed.

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).

Hanover Township has been committed to the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services as demonstrated by offering in-person instruction to our students from September 2020 through June 2021. The plan will be posted to the homepage of our district website which provides an opportunity for parents to be able to translate the document into a language of their choice. Upon request, we will make the necessary accommodations so that all parents / guardians are able to access the document and assist as necessary.