



## 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: Demarest Public School District**

**Date: 9/27/2021**

**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**

District will comply with current NJ Governor’s Executive Orders all year.

All students, staff and visitors will wear face masks which will remain optional while outdoors. Exceptions to the mask mandate include activities such as eating, playing instruments, aerobic exercise and instances during which wearing a mask would impede an individual’s health.

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

- a. Maintaining a minimum of three feet of distance between students in classroom settings, based on the CDC and NJDOH guidelines.
- b. Students will remain in their grade level cohorts for lunch.
- c. Desk shields are available upon request.

#### **C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- a. Nurses and teachers will teach and reinforce hand washing.
- b. Children will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask.
- c. Custodians will maintain adequate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette supplies.
- d. Sanitizing stations are throughout buildings in all classrooms and common areas.

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

- a. Custodians will clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often; such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys at least daily.
- b. Improve airflow was established last year and will still be utilized this year, to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants by way of needlepoint bi-polar ionization filters.

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

- a. School will identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.
- b. School district representatives will notify parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

**F. Diagnostic and screening testing**

- a. Identify rapid viral testing options in the community for the testing of individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

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

District will forward any vaccine opportunities when informed of area vaccination centers from the NJDOE, NJDOH, or any entity that can supply such resources.

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

All students with disabilities will have appropriate accommodations addressed based on the needs identified in their IEP's, which will support their health

and safety. This will include consultations with teachers, child study team, related service providers and school nurses to ensure that all precautions are in place, as well as any necessary supplies and resources to accommodate their 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)**

Demarest Public Schools will provide a full continuum of in person services to start the year. We will follow the curriculum developed by the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium based on the New Jersey State Learning Standards. Students will be assessed at the start of the year, using EasyCBM grades K-8 to determine their academic levels. Teachers will use assessment data to address the needs of all students through differentiated assignments, materials, instruction, and assessments. School counselors will continue providing social-emotional-mental health support for students through counseling services and in-class lessons. Additionally, all students grades 5-8 will be enrolled in a social-emotional learning class based on the Second Step program for a marking period. Staff will be involved in professional learning around social-emotional wellness of students, as well as have the opportunity to work with a guest speaker on the social-emotional wellness of adults. The I&RS Team will utilize a collection of data and information to

identify, screen, collaborate and implement interventions to promote student success. Our district does not provide food service but will work to coordinate with local vendors if any student is eligible for assistance.

### **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 Virtual Plan and the Road Forward were on Board of Education agendas where public comment was offered. In addition, both plans are posted on the website. In addition, The Reopening Committee, which includes administrators, teachers, staff Board of Education members, School Physician,

parents, students, met in the Spring to provide comments and feedback on the plan. The Superintendent presented the plan on October 12, 2021 in the public comment portion of the board of education meeting, which was advertised as required.

**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 plan is posted on the District website with access to all languages. Individuals with disabilities can use an assistive technology on their devices to access the plan on our website.