



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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District

Original Date: 06/15/2021 Revision Dates: 06/24/2021, 12/21/2021, 06/13/2022, 12/15/2022

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:

Effective March 7, 2022, the Public Health Emergency and the school mask mandate expired. As a result, on March 7, masks in the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District became optional for staff, students, and visitors and will continue to remain optional absent a newly declared public health emergency.

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

When possible and practical to do so, the district encourages three feet of distance between students in classroom settings while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

Periodic reminders on importance of hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and recognizing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are communicated to students and staff by our nursing staff. Hand sanitizer continues to be available in appropriate locations. HVAC equipment is routinely inspected to ensure all systems are functioning properly and that indoor facilities have proper ventilation, including Merv 13 filters when feasible. Additional safety precautions will be implemented if needed or as directed by CDC or DOH.

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

All cleaning products will be used in accordance with directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Whenever possible the list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 (available on the EPA's website) shall be used. The manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.) shall be used.

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

The school district follows Policy 8451 Control of Communicable Disease.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:

The District does not provide on site diagnostic and screening testing.

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

The District has not and does not plan to provide vaccinations for any staff members or students.

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

Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services for Students with Disabilities will continue to meet the obligations for all students. Plans and goals for the school year 2022-23 include additional SEL opportunities along with a Wellness Program adding another layer of support for students. Also included in this plan is PD for staff members to assist with identifying student's needs. The District contracted with an outside mental health agency to help with students experiencing school refusal, anxiety and depression. Counselors and case managers will maintain check-ins and communication for children with disabilities as well as communicating with staff.

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.

The RIHRHSD will continue to review the updated health concerns in both our state and county as a form of guidance. We currently maintain a normal school schedule. Our Health and Wellness Program along with additional SEL opportunities will be made available for all students and staff. Additional PD for staff for their own growth and to recognize when students need assistance and or wrap around support. Ongoing internal audits of facilities remain ongoing with a clear focus of maintaining a healthy, safe and secure environment for students 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
This plan has been shared on the district website and the health and safety of students has been discussed through the Strategic Planning Committee, made up of administration, staff, parents and community members. All in attendance are given the opportunity to discuss any concerns regarding the plan for the 2022-2023 school year.

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.
Translation will be made available with an online tool (Google Translate) or with a live interpreter via phone, virtual or in person. Any request for a disability will be provided when shared with school administrators.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools.

Wellness programs and SEL programs will be provided for students and staff. Professional Development will include in person and online training based on the district's goals and other pertinent areas including: Occupational Safety and Health, Wellness training, Social and Emotional Training.