



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: Madison Public Schools

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 06/16/2021

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): n/a

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

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriateness of mask wearing in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for a safe return to school, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- If guidance does not change from what is in place for the 2020-21 school year, the following established procedures will be followed:
 - The district will accommodate students who are unable to wear masks by providing face shields or other options as appropriate.
 - Breaks will be scheduled throughout the day to provide staff and students with relief from wearing face coverings.
 - School Nurses will continue to provide guidance to staff, students and families regarding proper mask wearing procedures
 - General guidance regarding proper selection and use of masks will be provided to the school community
 - Signage reinforcing the proper mask wearing procedures will be displayed throughout the school buildings and district offices

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

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriateness of physical distancing in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for a safe return to school, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- If guidance does not change from what is in place for the 2020-21 school year, the following procedures will be followed:
 - The district will strive to provide a baseline of 3 feet of physical distancing when feasible
 - Classroom spaces will be redesigned to accommodate required spacing.
 - When possible a “pod” structure may be used in grades PreK-5 that allows students to remain within a single classroom for as much time as is feasible.
 - Should the NJ DOH guidance change, the district will adjust practices accordingly.
 - Signage reinforcing proper distancing procedures will continue to be displayed throughout the school building and district offices

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to continue to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriate protocols for hand washing and respiratory etiquette in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for the 2021-22 school year, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- If guidance does not change from what is in place for the 2020-21 school year, the following established procedures will be followed:
 - Students and staff will follow protocols related to regular hand washing and sanitizing
 - Signage reinforcing proper distancing procedures will continue to be displayed throughout the school building and district offices
 - Hand washing/sanitizing will be expected to occur:
 - Upon entering the building
 - After changing classrooms or locations
 - After bathroom use
 - Before and after eating
 - Prior to dismissal
 - Hand sanitizing stations have been installed in each classroom and in common areas
 - Contactless hand soap stations, bottle filling stations, and hand drying stations will be installed, as feasible
 - School Nurses will continue to provide guidance for staff, students and families regarding proper hand washing/hand sanitizing procedures
 - Signage reinforcing proper hand washing procedures will continue to be displayed throughout the school buildings/offices

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- EPA-approved cleaning products will continue to be used throughout district facilities and will be labeled appropriately. Hand sanitizer, technology-safe sanitizing wipes, and classroom furniture disinfectant will be provided in each classroom.
- Supply consumption will be monitored quarterly
- Cleaning and disinfectant supplies will be monitored weekly to establish consumption rates.
- Soap consumption will be monitored on a daily basis by lead custodians to establish consumption rates.
- High-touch areas will be disinfected after students enter the building, in the middle of the day, and after dismissal. These areas include but are not limited to:
 - Classroom desks and chairs
 - Multipurpose rooms (not used for lunch)
 - Areas designated for before and after school activities (after students exit in AM/before return in PM)
 - Door handles/push bars
 - Handrails
 - Kitchen - limited food preparation days and will be cleaned after each use
 - Light switches
 - Equipment handles

- Main offices/nurses offices will be disinfected by staff upon departure and disinfected by custodial staff every evening.
 - Isolation rooms will be disinfected after 24 hour (or longer) waiting period
- Drinking fountains are being replaced with bottle filling stations and will be sanitized periodically throughout the day.
- Bathrooms will be sanitized after designated bathroom breaks and will be periodically cleaned throughout the day.
- Custodial/maintenance staff will be responsible for submitting the cleaning protocol checklist after each shift is completed.
- Current mitigation strategies
 - Needle Point Bipolar Ionization systems
 - Free standing HEPA grade air filtration units
 - Regular air filter changes for unit ventilators and roof top units
 - Window and door opening to promote adequate airflow when mechanical ventilation is not adequate
- Mechanical ventilation enhancement project information
 - HVAC inspections for all buildings will be conducted prior to the start of school to identify areas in need of remediation. Remediated actions may include HVAC repair, window opening, and/or the installation of air cleaning units (such as [Blue 211+ HEPA-grade air cleaning units](#))
 - In K-8 buildings, unit ventilators and roof-top unit systems provide fresh air exchange throughout the schools. All K-8 systems have also been upgraded with [Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization systems](#), to provide pathogen protection and reduce air particulate.
 - Most Madison High School fresh air exchange ventilation units remain non-functional. The installation of unit ventilators and roof top units will be complete November 2021. To achieve fresh air supply currently, windows should be opened at all times and HEPA-grade air cleaning units will be provided. In colder months, layered clothing should be worn in the classroom and the heating system may be adjusted to compensate for colder outdoor temperatures.
 - The district will be utilizing the existing heating system until the completion of the ventilation project. Once complete, the district will switch to using the unit ventilation system to bring fresh air (and heat) into the classrooms and window opening will no longer be needed.

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

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriateness of contact tracing, isolation and quarantining in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for the 2021-22 school year, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- If guidance does not change from what is in place for the 2020-21 school year, the following established procedures will be followed:
 - Contact Tracing
 - School Nurses, in conjunction with building administrators, lead all school based contact tracing
 - School Nurses identify and notify any and all in school close contacts
 - School Nurses collaborate with the Madison Department of Health with regard to determining the specified period for quarantine/isolation
 - The district will adhere to current state guidelines regarding quarantine and isolation procedure for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

- The district will continue to work closely with the Madison Department of Health regarding all contact tracing procedures

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to continue to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriateness of diagnostic and screening testing in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for the 2021-22 school year, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- If guidance does not change from what is in place for the 2020-21 school year, the following revised procedures will be followed:
 - The district will provide parents and staff with information regarding the signs/symptoms associated with COVID-19
 - On a monthly basis, parents will complete an attestation form that documents that parents daily completion of screening procedures as well as their agreement to keep their child(ren) home and seek medical attention if they present with any signs/symptoms of COVID-19
 - Staff will complete a similar attestation form on a monthly basis
 - Any student or staff member who presents with symptoms will be required to obtain written medical clearance in order to return to school/work.
 - At this time, the district will not initiate any diagnostic testing for staff and students.

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

- MPS urges the NJDOH and NJDOE to continue to allow districts to exercise local discretion in consultation with local health departments to determine the appropriateness of vaccination campaigns in the 2021-22 school year.
- When the NJDOH and NJDOE release guidance for the 2021-22 school year, MPS will solicit further stakeholder input and update the plan as necessary.
- The district has encouraged all eligible staff and students to become fully vaccinated and will partner with state and local healthcare providers to facilitate vaccination for all interested community stakeholders.

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

- Students who present with complex disabilities and/or health conditions will be provided with modifications per their unique needs and abilities
- When applicable, adjustments to students IEPs, 504 plans and Health Plans will be made to reflect current modifications in light of the health and safety protocols

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)

To the maximum extent possible, the district intends to operate at full capacity across all grade levels on a full day schedule. The full-day will allow students to receive not only appropriate instruction but also support designed to address their academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs. As has been the practice during the 2020-2021 school year, the district will work with families to ensure access to food and additional resources as necessary. The district will continue to provide training to parents on topics pertaining to mental health and wellness. The district will also provide ongoing training for staff on ways to further support the academic, social and emotional needs of students as they return for the 2021-2022 school year.

The district is also engaging our community regarding opportunities to identify and address any observed student and faculty needs, including academic, social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. Our district goals will incorporate a formalized and data-driven multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for all learners, to ensure that all students are able to achieve and progress emotionally, socially, and academically. .

3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments 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)

Since July 2020, MPS has actively engaged its faculty, parents, students and community members in the process of developing and adjusting our operational plans. As a result, we have operated continuously for in person learning without interruption for the entire 2020-21 school year with only one documented incident of “probable in-school transmission.”

Engagement strategies included surveys, Thoughtexchanges, public participation at Board meetings, Superintendent Coffees, the District Restart Committee, and other district and school communications. Records of this community engagement can be found on our district website at <https://www.madisonpublicschools.org/o/mps/page/communications-and-resources>. Regular communications regarding COVID-related operations and procedures can be found within the Dodger Updates at <https://www.madisonpublicschools.org/o/mps/news>.

Most recently, MPS engaged its parents, staff members, community members, and students in a Thoughtexchange to identify student needs for which ARP-funded programs, services and resources can be allocated. The result of that thought exchange was discussed with the public on June

16. The presentation can also be accessed on the district's website at <https://www.madisonpublicschools.org/o/mps/page/communications-and-resources>

The district will engage community members again over July and August and will update this plan accordingly as guidance and conditions change. This plan is available on the district's website for review at <https://www.madisonpublicschools.org/o/mps/page/communications-and-resources>.

- 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)***

This plan will be shared with the public as a Google Doc on the MPS App and Website. All translation and accessibility features within Google Docs and Apptegy (our app and website provider) will be available to all viewers in accordance with the MPS Board of Education Policy "1511 - Board of Education Website Accessibility," available at: <https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?PolicyID=1511&id=39d37009100d45af9f800b5d5e000bee>