



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: Netcong School District

/Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/26/2023

Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/26/2023

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 Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until the universal wearing of face masks and coverings are no longer required through an executive order, State or Department of Education directive. As face coverings are no longer required, all students, staff, and visitors to the school/district can wear a face covering if they so choose.

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

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until the practice of physical distancing is no longer required through an executive order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. At this time, physical distancing and cohorting are no longer required.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. The practice of proper hygiene will consistently be enforced with students and staff. Students and staff will be trained on correct handwashing techniques. Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands after using the bathroom and/or sneezing and blowing their noses. Hand sanitizer is in classrooms and at entrances.

Individuals will be required to wash their hands after removing gloves or after handling food service items. There are signs in bathrooms on how to properly wash one's hands.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. CASPR Pro Mobile portable units were purchased for classrooms and office spaces. These units run continuously after being plugged in and sanitize the air in classrooms and office spaces. "The CASPR Pro Mobile units 99.96% effective against bacteria, viruses, molds, and even reduce VOCs and odors." (<https://www.casprgroup.com/sectors/caspr-pro/>). Weather permitting, windows will be opened to maintain air flow. HVAC units in classrooms have a fresh air component that is utilized daily. Restrooms will be sanitized routinely throughout the day when staff and students are in the building. EPA approved cleaners will be available in classrooms so that any commonly used surfaces and materials can be wiped down between uses. The building is cleaned & sanitized daily by an outside cleaning company.

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

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive.
- If necessary, the Netcong School District will work with the Mount Olive Department of Health, the school nurse, and district administration to conduct contact tracing. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others. School officials will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. If staff and/or students need to be isolated and/or quarantined, the district will follow the most up to date parameters set forth by the New Jersey Department of Health and will collaborate with the Mount Olive Department of Health on timelines.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. School staff will visually check students and employees for symptoms upon arrival. Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed. All students and staff members have access to free, rapid COVID-19 tests.

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

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. The Netcong School District worked in partnership with Atlantic Health to assist staff with scheduling appointments for vaccines. The Netcong School District disseminates information to school community members on upcoming COVID-19 and Flu vaccination clinics sponsored by the Mt Olive DOH.

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

- The Netcong School District will support and impose the following expectations, until no longer required through an Executive Order, State, Department of Health, or Department of Education directive. As face coverings are no longer required, all students, staff, and visitors to the school/district can wear a face covering if they so choose. Anyone needing accommodations can contact the main office for assistance.

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 Netcong School District will continue to support the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of the students and staff. The services and supports include but are not limited to the programs below:

Summer School to close achievement gaps for students in grades 6-8.

RTI support over the summer.

Enrichment program over the summer for elementary school students.

Extra help sessions after school during the school year.

Staff training on mental health and social and emotional supports for students.

Continued collaborations with the School Culture and Climate Initiative.

PE, Art, and Music Academies will be offered over the summer for all students.

Beyond the school day activities will be offered for all students.

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)

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)

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools (1000 character limit).

The plan was presented at a Board of Education Meeting on September 26, 2023. After the presentation, the public was afforded the opportunity to provide feedback. Any Board or public comment will be considered before the plan is finalized and posted to the district's website. The Safe Return to School Plan will be translated in Spanish for our non-English speakers. Spanish speaking staff will be available to answer questions regarding the plan as needed. To further assist those in the community who are English Language Learners our website easily translates text content from English to Spanish utilizing the "Translate" icon located in the header of each webpage. To ensure that everyone is able to easily navigate the district website we utilize ADA-compliant features for those who lack fine motor skills, have visual impairments, and who may be color blind. District and building administrators will be available to answer any questions students, parents, staff members, or community members may have regarding the Safe Return to School Plan. The district offered two back-to-school nights where parents were shown how to access the district's website and the information available to them. District staff regularly assist parents with navigating the website and locating the information they may need. Professional development opportunities are available to staff as they relate to duties performed.