

Middletown Township Public Schools
Safe Return Plan
Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001 (1)

Date: June 23, 2021

Revision Dates: 12/13/21

Introduction and Background

In March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), Public Law 117-2, into law. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) informed school districts of ARP requirements in its [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#). 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. The Middletown Township School District is eligible for \$4,038,839; \$2,692,560 is available now and an additional \$1,356,270 becomes available in 2022-23. All funds must be obligated before June 30, 2023. Additional information on ARP ESSER and other federal grant programs related to COVID-19 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 its 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, such as Middletown Township Public Schools. 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 finalizing the district's 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.

LEAs must also submit to the NJDOE and post on their website the Safe Return Plan by June 24, 2021. To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE provided a template, which Middletown Township Public Schools used in developing the plan below. Middletown Township Public School's Safe Return Plan includes the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan and the information below will be included in the district's ARP ESSER fund application that will submit to the NJDOE by June 24, 2021.

In addition, on May 17, 2021 Governor Murphy [announced](#) that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year school districts will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction. It is expected that the NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for school-specific health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it is developed.

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 mask:

Mask wearing for all students, staff and visitors, will be optional unless required by law. If masks are required by law, the following protocols will be followed in Middletown Township Public Schools:

- Face masks will be available to staff and students, as necessary.
- All staff members and students will be required to wear face masks in accordance with the law.
- Accommodations for an individual who is unable to wear a face mask will be addressed according to that individual's need and in accordance with applicable laws.
- A visitor's entry to the school/district facility may be denied if they refuse to wear a face mask for non-medical reasons.
- Face mask signage and verbal cues will be displayed and utilized on district property and inside buildings.

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

If social distancing in schools/classrooms is required by law, the following protocols will be implemented in Middletown Township Public Schools:

- Schools will allow for social distancing within classrooms and other non-instructional areas as required by law, to the maximum extent practicable.
- If a school is not able to maintain the social distancing requirement required by law, then additional modifications may be implemented.

c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Middletown Township Public Schools will address handwashing and respiratory etiquette as follows:

- Handwashing
 - Signage regarding proper handwashing techniques will be posted in bathrooms.
 - Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 70% alcohol) will be located in/near: classrooms, entrances and exits of buildings, lunchrooms/APRs, and bathrooms.
- Respiratory Etiquette
 - If masks and social distancing are required by law, individual student desk shields or other mitigation efforts may be provided when students cannot wear masks and/or social distance.

- Individual student desk shields will be provided upon the request of the parent or student.
- Students will be reminded of respiratory etiquette.

d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities:
 - Staff will adhere to existing required cleaning practices and procedures as well as any new specific requirements of the local health department and/or any other such jurisdiction with authority.
 - Staff will adhere to district procedures, including cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned/disinfected, proper methods, and materials to be used.
 - Maintain adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Ventilation:
 - All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component.
 - Windows will be opened, as practicable.
 - Filter(s) will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

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

The following protocols will be followed in adherence to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational/health records in Middletown Township Public Schools:

- The Superintendent, in consultation with the local health department, will notify the district community of confirmed cases, when applicable.
- The school nurse in each building will be the contact for students, their families, and staff when reporting COVID-19 cases.
 - School nurses will report COVID-19 cases to the District Director of Student Support Services and share the completed COVID-19 close contact spreadsheet.
 - Nurses will follow NJDOH reporting procedures, as required.
- **If the school district becomes aware that a COVID-19 positive individual has spent time in a district facility during the contagious period, the district will follow procedures as described below:**
 - **In-school close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual shall be notified of their status as a close contact.**
 - **Such individuals shall not be excluded from school/work, but may voluntarily be excused for self-quarantine. Students who voluntarily**

self-quarantine due to being identified as an in-school close contact shall be eligible for supplemental instruction for up to ten (10) days from the date of close contact.

- Designated close contacts shall monitor for COVID-19 symptoms daily and shall not appear for school should symptoms be present.
- The Centers for Disease Control recommend that any individual designated as a close contact undergo COVID-19 screening testing five (5) days after close contact. The District shall make COVID-19 testing available for any close contact upon request, and provided that State funds remain available for such testing.
- The District will continue to monitor data and adjust protocols accordingly.
- This protocol is limited to in-school close contacts and does not affect close contacts occurring outside of school.

f. Diagnostic and screening testing

- All staff, students and parents/guardians will be informed and educated on COVID-19 compatible symptoms, as per NJDOH and CDC guidance, and the need to report symptoms to their school's health office.
- The following protocols for symptomatic students and staff will be followed in Middletown Township Public Schools, as required:
 - The district will encourage parents to keep their child home when they are sick.
 - The district will encourage staff members to stay home when they are sick.
 - Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated. Students should remain in isolation with supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

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

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Middletown Township Public School District partnered with the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey and the County Superintendent's Office to assist staff in completing the COVID-19 vaccination process. As a result approximately 70% of district staff are fully vaccinated. The District will continue to provide information regarding the vaccination process through the district website and school health offices. The district will continue to work collaboratively with staff, parents and students, as needed.

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

Some of the examples of appropriate accommodations in student IEPs include: determining how paraprofessional support and therapeutic services for students can be provided with social distancing mandates in place, and what other health/safety measures are needed if social distancing between students and staff is not practical, e.g. addition of face shield over mask. The accommodations will remain in place during the

2021-2022 school year, as necessary. Staff members will assist students with disabilities with mask placement as needed and appropriate hand washing procedures. Therapeutic services such as OT, PT and speech may be integrated using alternative scheduling options to ensure that the recommended minutes of instruction are delivered to the maximum extent possible. We will continue to monitor progress in each student's goals and objectives throughout the 2021-2022 academic year and we will continue to make any accommodations needed to ensure their health and safety.

Ensuring Continuity of Services

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 Middletown Township Public School District will:

- Continue to implement its multi-tiered system of support to address students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- Utilize formative and summative assessments, such as LinkIt!, IKAN/GLoSS mathematics strategy assessments, and F&P literacy assessments, and use assessment data to address student's individual achievement gaps and needs in order to personalize instruction and learning.
- Utilize the results of the end-of-year LinkIt! Form C assessments for both ELA and Mathematics, in conjunction with the Achieve the Core Coherence Map and its formative assessments, to target major content standards and spiral instruction during the subsequent school year.
- Offer summer programs that will provide students with opportunities for enrichment, remediation, and acceleration of learning standards as well as engagement with co-curricular areas, such as instrumental music and Esports.
- Expand students' access to Advanced Placement courses through additional community outreach and summer Jump Start programs
- Continue to fund and expand upon the number of Mathematics and Reading Interventionists at all levels K-12 in order to support student learning through push-in and pull-out instructional models tailored to learners' specific needs, as applicable.
- Continue to implement and expand upon social and emotional learning resources and programs as well as provide staff with additional SEL professional development opportunities.
- Expand upon counseling services available to our students.
- Provide information on community mental health resources..
- Continue to provide free lunch and breakfast to students through the Seamless Summer program which is currently extended through June 30, 2022.

Public Comment

1. *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.*

The public will have the opportunity to comment on **the proposed revisions to the** plan at the board of education meeting scheduled for **December 13, 2021**. Prior to the meeting a draft of the proposed plan will be shared with the community. Input from the public will be taken into consideration by the board of education and district administration and, if warranted, changes will be made in the draft plan.

2. *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.*

The Middletown Township Public School District's Safe Reopening Plan, **including revised plans**, will be shared with the public on its website as a Google Document. Google Documents can be translated in multiple languages. Below is a screen shot from the MTPS website that provides translation via a drop down menu:

