



## 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: Pascack Valley Regional High School District**

**Date (06/07/2021):**

**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: The Pascack Valley Regional High School District will abide by the recommendations of the CDC and the regulations put in place by the New Jersey Department of Education and our local departments of health. As of the writing of this plan (June 7, 2021) masks are required to be worn by all students, staff, and visitors in school buildings. This will continue to be followed unless the regulations are changed. In the event that regulations are changed allowing for masks not to be worn, the wearing of masks will be optional by staff, students, and visitors.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): The Pascack Valley Regional High School District will abide by the recommendations of the CDC and the regulations put in place by the New Jersey Department of Education and our local departments of health. As of the writing of this plan (June 7, 2021) maintaining “social distancing” of 3-6 feet is recommended between desks and individuals. This will continue to be followed unless the regulations are changed. The intention for the 2021-22 school year is that cohorts will be eliminated and all students will attend school for a full day, every day.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: The Pascack Valley Regional High School District will abide by the recommendations of the CDC and the regulations put in place by the New Jersey Department of Education and our local departments of health. The district is in the process of changing over all faucets in restrooms to “hands free” models to reduce germ transmission. Further, alcohol-based hand sanitizer will continue to be available in each classroom and office with frequent hand washing encouraged throughout the school day, especially prior to eating, drinking, handling food, or after restroom use. All staff and students will be encouraged to turn away and cough “into their elbow” if they must cough or sneeze.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: The Pascack valley Regional High School District will continue to provide enhanced cleaning protocols. However, since we will be returning to a full school day, we will either require overtime or the use of substitute custodians to complete the workload. We are able to accomplish this during the 2020-21 school year because we have split up the shifts and sections. With respect to improving ventilation, we have hired our Engineer to perform a study of our existing ventilation and they are currently working on improving the ventilation and filtration systems beyond their current acceptable levels.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments: The Pascack Valley Regional High School District will abide by the recommendations of the CDC and the regulations put in place by the New Jersey Department of Education and our local departments of health in regards to contact tracing carried out by our school nurses in conjunction with our school physician. If a student or staff member were to become ill during the school day, they would be quarantined using existing protocols and contact tracing would take place immediately.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: The Pascack Valley Regional High School District continues to abide by the recommendations of the CDC and the regulations put in place by the New Jersey Department of Education and our local departments of health and all staff and students complete a daily diagnostic screening. This will continue to be followed unless the regulations are changed to eliminate it.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: The Pascack Valley Regional High School District encourages all staff and eligible students to become vaccinated against COVID-19. The district continues to share all vaccination opportunities and clinics with members of the school community in conjunction with local pharmacies and Bergen County.

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

In terms of appropriate accommodation to ensure health and safety of students with disabilities, for the most fragile students, accommodations through the IEP and health plans (nurses office) are in place. In terms of mental health, we are adding to current mental health support personnel with contracted mental health support persons. Also, including transition plans in students' IEPs for students who may experience difficulty with the "return-to-normal" including returning to full-time in-person. Finally, SEPAG has a Mental Health Committee and will be providing additional feedback to the District with regard to the social and emotional needs of students with disabilities.

## **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 intention of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District is to have a school year in 2021-22 as "normal" as possible while still adhering to all regulations from state and local authorities, including the New Jersey Department of Education and local departments of health. Plans have been made by the administration to provide services during the summer and the 2021-22 school year for academic acceleration, enrichment courses, online opportunities, and social-emotional wellness programs. Furthermore, during the 2021-22 school year programs will be available to support the academic needs of students as well as the student and staff's emotional and mental health needs via counseling, assemblies, programs, interventions, the I&RS system, professional development, and conferences. The intention is for food services and lunch to run during the 2021-22 school year, including the district's participation in the Free and Reduced Lunch program.

### 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): This plan was reviewed by the District Restart Committee, comprised of students, parents, teachers, counselors, custodians, support staff, administration, and Board of Education Members on Wednesday May 26, 2021. The plan will be presented at the public Board of Education meeting on June 7, 2021 and the public will be able to offer comment. Based on comments and feedback, the plan may be adjusted as needed.

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 Pascack Valley Regional High School District has followed the suggested template provided by the New Jersey Department of Education for this plan. Like will most district communication, if a parent requests translation services or an alternate format, the district will give its best effort to provide that service in a reasonable time frame.