



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: Ho-Ho-Kus School District

Date (06/22/2021):

Date Revised (06/22/2021):

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

The District plan is for a full day return to in person instruction for September 2021 per the most recent guidance released by the Governor. Currently, the District is required to comply with the CDC, NJDOE, and Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission guidelines. At the present time, this means all students in school for a full day. The Ho-Ho-Kus School District is prepared to open under these requirements, but will continue to monitor updated guidance and Executive Orders as they are released. Updated guidance will be included in future versions of this plan and released to the public in a timely manner.

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 District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- All buildings will have signage and picture displays modeling proper mask wearing.
- Face coverings are defined as masks covering a person’s nose and mouth without gaps.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.
- If you have to continually adjust your mask, it doesn’t fit properly, and you might need to find a different type of mask.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.

- Extra masks will be available in the School Health Office and at the Security Officer's station in the main office lobby.
- School nurses will provide a refresher video and/or presentation for all students and staff in September.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, and/or situations arise.

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

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- At this time, the District is planning for a full return of all students for September 2021, based upon the most recent guidance from the Governor's office.
- Students and staff will maintain physical distances as determined through guidelines and mandates directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health (NJ CALI Score), and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- Enough space is available under the current requirements (3 feet) to allow all classroom students to be in a room at the same time.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, and/or situations arise.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- Procedures for hand washing will be posted in bathrooms and classrooms. Students and staff will wash their hands first thing in the morning upon entering the classroom. During the course of the day, hand sanitizer will also be used. There is a sink and hand sanitizer in each classroom. All locations in classrooms/therapy rooms have hand sanitizer.
- All students will wash their hands upon entering the classroom at the start of their day. They will then use hand sanitizer that is in each classroom and/or wash their hands throughout the day. If students leave the room they will wash hands upon reentering the classroom. If students go to another classroom, they will repeat the same process.
- Contactless hand sanitizing stations are located at every entrance to the building. There are also hand sanitizer dispensers in every classroom and office.
- Students and staff will receive instruction from the school nurses on hand washing and respiratory etiquette.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, or situations arise.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- The district has developed an aggressive cleaning regimen and will take extra precautions when it comes to the sanitation of the school campus. A schedule for increased, thorough cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and areas will be in place. The sanitization of bathrooms will happen on a rotational basis, in between use, all day every day.
- Custodial staffing will be increased and hours will be shifted to have more staff available for cleaning and sanitizing during the school day.
- A checklist is used for increased, touchpoint cleaning and disinfection. This will include the rigorous cleaning/disinfection of all high vector touchpoints continuously during the course of each day, including door knobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops, bathroom facilities, shared phones, desks, chairs, benches, handrails, windows, drinking fountains, etc.
- Common areas will be frequently disinfected throughout the day.
- Bathrooms will be frequently disinfected throughout the day.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles; hydration stations will be available where water bottles may be refilled without contact.
- The school will be sanitized using CDC recommended hospital-grade cleaners approved for use in schools.
- Antimicrobial wax was applied to all floor surfaces throughout the campus. This wax provides an excellent barrier and prevents the growth/spread of bacteria and viruses. This will continue in 2021-22.
- Teachers will be provided with EPA-registered disposable wipes to clean commonly used surfaces.
- The school had a mechanical contractor and engineering technology firm perform a maximum efficiency assessment. Mechanical repairs and updates were completed as scheduled for the proper exchange of fresh air balanced with cooled air. All classrooms are designed to have continuous input of fresh air and return air with the ventilation systems in place. Recommended CDC approved filters were purchased and a system for replacing filters has been instituted.
- The District's HVAC system uses MERV filters. All rooms are air conditioned with a central air system or individual window units. Teachers are encouraged to open windows as well to facilitate air flow.
- Every learning space and office is equipped with a HEPA Filter Air Purifier. A system for replacing HEPA filters is in place.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, or situations arise.

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

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- The District will follow CDC, state, and local protocols in the quarantining of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and for those who were in contact with these individuals.
- Where students and staff present with symptoms of COVID-19 they will be isolated and sent home.
- Members of the contact tracing committee completed three hours of training provided through John Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing Course.
- Internal documents maintain records of contact tracing.
- All positive cases of COVID-19 will be reported to the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission as required.
- Nurses and the school administration are well-versed in best practices in contact tracing. Parents are updated regularly by the Superintendent.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, or situations arise.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- Any required screening process for attendance at school will be determined by guidance from the Governor's Office and NJ Department of Health.
- Diagnostic testing will be completed through referral to outside testing sites and private medical practitioners.
- Updates to this plan may change as new information, mandates, or situations arise.

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

- The District has and will continue to keep all members of the school community informed.
- All staff who were interested in receiving a vaccine have already been vaccinated. Local resources are available for any parents choosing to vaccinate their children.

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

- The District will follow all guidelines and mandates as directed by the NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, and the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission. In the case of discrepancy, the District will consult with local health professionals from the Pandemic Response Committee/Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- The Supervisor of Special Services and the Child Study Team are meeting with families of students with IEPs to write and or amend IEPs based upon any potential issues that may impact health regulations, academic, social, or emotional needs arising from the 2020-2021 school year.

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 District is beginning the 2021-2022 school year well-prepared for student learning. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, all students received live, in person instruction, 5 days a week. A small number of families opted to have their children learn remotely during the year. At the start of the year, students were in AM/PM cohorts each day; beginning April 22, students returned to school together from 8:15-12:45 each day. Having consistent, daily contact with teachers and live instruction supported student learning in very significant ways.

- Daily schedules will support and focus upon building relationships and community.
- Tiered instruction in a response to intervention model will be addressed with all students.
- The District added another full-time mental health professional for the 2021-22 school year to support mental health and well-being.
- Personnel such as the School Counselor, Mental Health Social Worker, School Psychologist, and School Social Worker will support teachers and students with regard to trauma, anxiety, and other social factors impacting wellness.
- Student engagement activities were incorporated and will continue as the district seeks way to consistently meet students' needs. (The Robin Project)
- Benchmarks have been established with data collected during the 2020-21 school year.
- The I&RS Team, Data Team, and RTI Team will support progress monitoring.
- The District has allocated funds to modify curriculum scope and sequences in all core academic content areas to address any perceived or real needs. Summer curriculum work will occur with the staff.
- Link-It and Reading Assessments will be administered to each student at the beginning of the year that will continue to inform teacher instruction. These assessments will continue throughout the year to continually monitor growth and further inform instruction.
- A summer social skills camp (one week) was offered to the entire school community with about 50 students in Grades K-8 attending.

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)

A presentation of this plan was made publicly at the District's Board of Education meeting on June 22, 2021. The meeting was held remotely on Google Meet. Public comment was available at the Board of Education meeting or through submission of questions/feedback to the Business Administrator/Board Secretary at the following email address: mjacobus@hohokus.org. The plan was posted on the District website on June 22, 2021.

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 plan was posted on the District website. In addition, any family who has any questions or needs translation may contact the District for further information and assistance.