



Hamilton Township School District 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 consider those comments in the 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 their Safe Return Plans on their website 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 developing 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 before 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.

Hamilton Township School District

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Jeffery Zito, EdD, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Date: 06/08/2021

Date Revised 3/15/2022; 3.15.2023; 3/15/2024:

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. Current guidance is referenced below. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

HTSD will follow NJDOH requirements for wearing masks. Current guidance is referenced below. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices. Face coverings will be required for students in school and on the bus unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health. School staff and authorized visitors must wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or if the individual is under two years of age. Exceptions to requirements for face coverings shall be as follows: doing so would inhibit the individual's health; the individual is in extreme heat outdoors, the individual is in water; a student's documented medical condition or disability as reflected in an IEP or 504 Plan, precludes the use of face covering.

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

HTSD will adhere to the most conservative elements of local, state, and federal guidelines regarding social distancing. Students and staff will be kept in cohorts, with corresponding records available for contact tracing. Furniture will be adjusted accordingly to accommodate for social distancing. Students will be seated at least three feet apart whenever and wherever possible. Suppose a school cannot maintain this physical distance. In that case, additional modifications should be considered, including using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction, or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart. Each school in the district will provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart in lines and at other times. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

HTSD will follow NJDOH requirements for handwashing and respiratory etiquette. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices. Students must wash their hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, after outdoor playtime, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing. If washing with soap and water is impossible, students will wash with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol). The district will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Such stations should be in each classroom that does not have an existing hand washing station/sink, at entrances and exits of buildings, and near lunchrooms. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

HTSD has developed a plan for increased routine cleaning and disinfection, Policy #1648. HTSD has enhanced ventilation via opened HVAC dampers to increase airflow. The district will thoroughly clean school facilities and offices, focusing on common areas and high-touch locations. Cleaning schedules have been modified according to student cohort schedules. Classrooms/common spaces will be deep cleaned daily; bathrooms will be cleaned every 2 hours. Custodians will utilize disinfecting electrostatic sprayers. All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems, where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

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

departments. See Hamilton Township School Protocols for Contact tracing, Isolation, and Quarantining: Board of Education Policy 1648. HTSD shall fully cooperate in sharing information with the Atlantic County Health Department to fulfill all mandated Contact Tracing/ Isolation/ Quarantine/readmission requirements. When students or staff are experiencing discomfort or potential symptoms of COVID-19, they are isolated from others. School Nurses contact the Atlantic County Health Department for Contact Tracing. Contacts/Cohort and Attendance information will be shared with the ACHD. Student, staff, team, and bus cohorts will be informed and immediately placed on quarantine based on CDC and ACHD recommendations. Students/staff will be readmitted to school according to NJDOH and Atlantic County Department of Health guidance. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

HTSD has provided screening guidelines to families and staff based on Health Department guidelines. School staff will check students and employees for symptoms upon arrival; this may include temperature checks. Health checks will follow privacy laws

and regulations. Results will be documented when signs of COVID-19 are observed. Students and employees with disabilities will have accommodations provided for them. Students and employees with COVID-19 symptoms will be safely isolated from others. School officials will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. Suppose an individual who has spent time in a school district facility tests positive for COVID-19. In that case, district officials will notify the Atlantic County Department of Health, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

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

HTSD will provide access to the COVID-19 vaccination for those who are eligible. The district has partnered with AtlanticCare and the Atlantic County Department of Health to provide access to COVID-19 vaccinations. Nurses communicate with the above-referenced agencies to verify the availability of vaccines and communicate available and updated vaccination site information to parents and staff. The school district hosted vaccination clinics for staff in March 2021, October 2021, and November 2021 for staff, parents, and children ages 5 to 11. Nurses will continue coordinating with the above agencies and conduct further in-district clinics if necessary. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

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

HTSD will follow NJDOE requirements to ensure appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions, including Medically fragile students with IEPs, Students with complex disabilities with IEPs, or Students who require accommodations under a 504 plan. Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports will be implemented as appropriate. These supports include Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Wraparound Support, Food Service and Distribution, and Quality Child Care. The district will evaluate new guidance as it becomes available to adjust local policies and practices.

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)

HTSD will ensure continuity of services for all sub-groups and mitigate learning gaps via learning acceleration, PreK-8. Staff will be provided with Professional Learning opportunities to meet the demands of struggling learners using a learning acceleration framework. The district will plan, design, and implement PreK-8 extended learning opportunities to provide struggling students with small-group instruction delivered by highly effective teachers. PreK-8, the district is equipped and prepared to operate using a 1:1 device model as needed and as necessary. The district will build a tiered intervention model of school-based mental health support to meet the needs of students and staff. The district plans to use full-day schedules during the 2021 - 22 school year. The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and will apply for a waiver for the 2021 - 22 school year, allowing all students to receive breakfast and lunch free of charge.

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. The ARP requires LEAs to seek public comment for each 60-day plan revision. (1000 character limit) HTSD has provided multiple opportunities for public comment on our plan. Our Restart Committee commenced in June 2020, and it includes members of the Board, Administrative Team, Teachers Association, and Parents. The district holds monthly board meetings with opportunities for the public to comment on district operations. An updated draft of the plan as of December 2021 is posted on the district website with the opportunity for public comments on a Google Document. The district will continue to monitor the changing guidance and update the community accordingly. The District Administration will present any changes necessary to the plan to the Board of Education based on guidance throughout the school year.

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)
HTSD will ensure that the plan for a Safe Return to in-person Instruction and Continuity of Services is accessible to all members of our school community. The plan is posted on the district websites with a translation feature. Additionally, the website is ADA-compliant, enabling all school community members to access and review the document. Because the district is a 1:1 device district, the district devices can also be used to translate the plan and provide access to the text-to-speech accommodations.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (0 of 1000 maximum characters used)
HTSD will continue to provide professional development to all staff in learning acceleration and differentiation to assist student learning and meet learning gaps due to the pandemic. Additionally, HTSD will use the results of the Panorama Survey to assess staff and student needs for professional learning, social-emotional well-being, and technology. A year-long professional learning plan is based on the highest priorities identified. HTSD will work with parents, teachers, students, and community partners to develop a comprehensive education support plan to provide equitably high-quality academic experiences.