



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 updated Safe Return Plans by December 23, 2022.** 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 December 23, 2022. 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.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools

Date (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

Mask wearing will coincide with revised requirements of CDC and be aligned with Local DOH recommendations. Currently mask wearing is required for 5 days when returning from COVID. See Restart and Recovery Plan Fall 2020 (RRP) A.1a.(1)(d), A.1. b. (2) & (3), A.1c. (10) & (2), A.1d.(2), A.1.de.(4):(5):(6):7(7) Appendices A,B,C,D,E.

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

All instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities will comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with latest CDC requirements and local DOH recommendations. See RRP 2020 A.1.b.(1):(2):(3):&(4), A.1.d.(2)&(3), A.1.e(2)(a)&(c)(iv), A.1.h(1)(a)&(d), A.1.i.(1)(b)&(3), A.1.j.(1). Appendices B,D,E.H.I.J

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

For classrooms that have existing hand washing stations, they are prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).

Students are encouraged to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing. If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) is to be used. See RRP 2020 A.1.a.(1)(d), A.1.b.(7)&(8), A.1h.(1)(e), A.1i.(1)(d), A.1.j.(1). Appendices A,B,H,I,J.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The building principal in consultation with the maintenance supervisor have developed a procedure for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. The procedure includes cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used, and routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched as follows: Sanitizing bathrooms; Classroom desks and chairs; Lunchroom tables and chairs; Door handles and push plates; Handrails; Kitchens and bathrooms; Light switches; Handles on equipment (e.g. athletic equipment); Buttons on vending machines and elevators; Shared telephones; Shared desktops; Shared computer keyboards and mice; Drinking fountains; School bus seats and windows. See RRP2020 A.1.c.(3),A.1.g.,A.1.h.(1)(a)&(c),A.1.i.(1)9e)&(g)(i),A.1.i(2),A.1.i.(3) Appendices C,G,H,I.

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

SCVTS will follow the latest CDC guidelines and work with the local Health Departments to perform contact tracing to identify close contacts, isolation protocols and quarantining timelines. School nurses will continue to be the liaison with sending districts and contact tracers. Administration and teachers will work with the school nurses to determine current protocols for students in our care as nurses serve as the lead in these practices. The superintendent and nurses serve as contacts to the local Health Department representatives and with the school physician. See RRP 2020A.1.e.,A1.f.,B.2.g. Appendices E,F,M

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Health checks are being done safely and respectfully according to privacy laws and regulations. Results will be documented when signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are observed. Any screenings will take into account the student's disability and any need for accommodations. See RRP2020, A.1.d.(1), A.1.e. Appendices D.E.

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

SCVTS has partnered with the Somerset County Department of Health to provide timely vaccinations to all faculty and staff; these partnerships will be accessed for continued vaccinations involving students above the age of twelve and any adults who need a vaccination.

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

MTSS is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment in grades Pre-K through twelve for academics and behavior that offers educators and families a mechanism to identify individual students who need extra support. This tiered approach is being developed by school officials for each student via their IEP or 504 plan. Wraparound services differ from traditional school-based services in their comprehensive approach to addressing the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students with interventions both inside and outside of the school environment. Linkages school-based services provide counseling and recreational activities and mentoring on-site. These services augment our

national school counselor program. Also included are services delivered by a school social worker employed as a health and wellness counselor. see RRP2020 A.1.a.(1)(e),A.1.b(2)(a),A.1.c.(1)&(2),A.1.e.(1)(d),A.1.e.(5),A.1.e.(6)(d),A.2.,B.1.d. Appendices A,B,C,E,K,L.

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 School District has offered in-person instruction since October 5th, 2021. The district will continue to implement practices and protocols informed by experts. Practices will be informed by up-to-date information from the Governor's Office, NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Health, the district's local health officers, and the district's medical professionals. The district's original Restart and Recovery Plan addresses continuity of services by providing staff and students with devices (and WIFI hotspots, when needed) to provide access to instruction when remote instruction is deemed necessary. Staff, including counselors and nurses, have made accommodations so that services can be provided to both virtual and in-person students. Social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, are being addressed through counseling by internal and external mental health clinicians.

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. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

The district sought public input through a survey, information went out via our alert system to all educational community members through June 23rd, 2021. All input was taken into consideration. Reminders appeared on the website and via weekly messages. The plan itself was publicly discussed at the Board of Education's June 21st, 2021 meeting, as evidenced by the board agenda. The plan was subsequently posted to the district website. The Principal of the school continues to have monthly meetings with parents to discuss their concerns and get feedback.

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 SCVTS School District's Safe Reopening Plan is limited to minimal pages and written in an understandable and uniform format. It is posted on the district's website, which includes web accessibility tools, guaranteeing adherence to international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Portions of the plan are articulated each week as the items become relevant via the alert system in both Spanish and English.

C. Briefly describe any guidance professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (88 of 1000 maximum characters used)

SCVTHS continues to look for Professional Development Opportunities to provide to the staff. Professional Development Workshops took place this past September to provide teachers with more resources that they can use in the classrooms. Another Professional Development is scheduled for February. Our Professional Learning Communities continue to adapt to the changing times.