



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: Mercer County Technical School

Date: 06/07/2021

Date Revised (06/15/2021):

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

No one will be permitted in facilities without a mask unless due to a known health condition or under the age of 2 years. Signs requiring face masks and describing the proper wearing are displayed throughout the buildings. Emergency face masks will be provided to visitors, students and staff as needed. No visitors are permitted in the buildings without a proper face mask. MCTS has made the wearing of masks while outdoors optional for students participating in recess, Physical Education classes and sporting events. The district will look to ongoing updates by the CDC, NJDOH and Executive Orders(EOs) regarding the wearing of face coverings in NJ schools and adjust as deemed necessary.

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

Administration will work with the school staff to rearrange workspaces in the building in order to accommodate social distancing guidelines. Each space was reviewed by administration to ensure the workspaces are in compliance with guidelines. The school schedule will be designed to limit the amount of student movement throughout the building and to utilize space to ensure the highest level of safety. Instructional staff were informed regarding safe practices to maintain social distancing guidelines. Signage promoting behaviors to reduce the spread are visible. One-way foot signs direct traffic. Max. Occupancy posted on each space. Barriers are placed in various spaces. Student foldable barriers have been placed in instructional areas. Shared objects are disinfected between uses. Instructional staff are notified on procedures for students storing their belongings. Instructors will be encouraged to use outdoor space as much as possible. The district will follow CDC/DOH/EOs.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Students and staff are encouraged to practice proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Signs with proper handwashing techniques are displayed near sinks. Signs reminding students and staff to cover coughs/sneezes are also displayed throughout the campus. Alcohol hand sanitizer is available in each instructional and administrative space. Each shop has a shop sink equipped with soap and towels for handwashing. All toilet rooms have soap and paper towels near the sink. Nursing staff will be asked for assistance in informing/reminding staff and students about frequent handwashing and sanitizer use.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

B&G monitors functionality of HVAC equipment and repairs and has verified window functionality. Staff to consult with nurses about student health concerns. Filters changed quarterly. In the event of a positive case, cleaning key touch points and bathrooms will be done periodically during the day. Normal cleaning and disinfection cleaning will occur each evening. Deep cleaning conducted on Wednesdays. After surfaces and objects are cleaned and sanitized with an EPA Approved H2O2 solution, all surfaces and objects are sprayed using an EPA registered disinfectant-Brutabs. Spaces will be closed for 12-24 hours after notification of presumptive positive. HVAC will be shut off/isolated. Custodial staff with appropriate PPE and cleaning/disinfecting equipment will clean with H2O2 hard surfaces followed by disinfection. All areas occupied by ill persons will have filtered air scrubbers placed in them for 24-48 hrs. Spaces will have hydroxyl generator installed to clean the air/surfaces.

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

Daily logs are maintained from the data collected from the daily screening application and is available for contact tracing, along with attendance records. Building principal/supervisor and school nurse will inform local DOH, to provide critical data to DOH immediately: (names addresses, phone #'s of all involved) time/date of notification, exposure potential, individual attendance pattern, class lists, staff lists, bus seating/list of students. Buildings to complete entry in google doc to keep track of cases. Contact Superintendent office.

MCTS has designated holding areas for students presenting with symptoms, prior to being sent home, all students or staff will have a Temperature Check and be evaluated by a school nurse. Staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be sent home.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

MCTS will have students conduct daily health screenings twice a day. First by performing a temperature wellness questionnaire in the morning at home, completing the COVID Health Screening Questionnaire app. A second screening will be conducted by the classroom teacher as students enter the class. Screening will be conducted by the school nursing staff for those who feel ill at school. The district maintains a COVID protocol document for administration to advise staff/students of their ability to enter our buildings should they answer unfavorably to any of the questions on the daily screening. Daily logs will be maintained from the data collected from the application and is available for contact tracing and review by administration to ensure compliance.

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

The district coordinated with various health organizations to ensure that staff that were eligible for vaccines were provided with an opportunity.

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

Instructors are expected to consult with school nursing staff to monitor any students who may have special medical needs. Once identified, follow up with Buildings and Grounds and Custodial staff if additional sanitizing or other modifications need to be put in place for those students.

Remote learning options are currently available for those students that require such special accommodations for health and safety reasons.

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)

ESSER II funds will provide summer programs for full time students to address learning loss, provide nursing services, and tutoring. Perkins funding will provide tutoring services. Title I funding will provide guest speakers to address social emotional concerns. Sheltered Instruction training for staff will assist the ELL population. District funds will provide PD to staff to continue to address Post-Covid concerns.

MCTS will continue to provide communication to stakeholders through newsletters, social media, Youtube videos, and the Powerschool alert system, a program that allows for individual and group notifications. Grades will continue to be entered into Powerschool parent portal on a daily and weekly basis. Dual Enrollment courses at Mercer County Community College will follow and adhere to the grading breakdown of the institution and instructor. Remote Instruction for medically fragile students with medical documentation will be provided.

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)

MCTS set up a universal email address to receive public comment (publiccomments@mcts.edu). A draft of the plan was posted on the district website for accessibility to the public for review for comment. The district sent out a robo-call to all staff and families notifying them of the comment period (June 8th to June 11th).

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 presented in plain language on our district website. The document is also available in Spanish on our website. If a parent requires an alternate written or other translation, one will be provided to the greatest extent practicable.

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)

MCT will utilize consultants through Perkins funding to provide consultative services to teachers regarding curriculum modifications. Sheltered instruction PD will be provided to address the needs of the ELL population. Jonathan Catherman will provide PD to staff to assist with transitioning students back to learning Post-Covid.

Provide current link to the district's website where the plan is posted.

<https://www.mcts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Safe-Return-Plan-MCTS.pdf>