



## 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: University Heights Charter School

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): June 21,2021

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:** Staff and students will continue to verbal and written material that explains the importance of wearing a mask that covers the mouth and fits snugly against the sides of the face. University Heights Charter will continue to provide masks to staff and students and follow the guidelines of the CDC. Face mask etiquette is promoted and students and staff are encouraged to apply a new mask daily and a new mask after sneezing or coughing.

**B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)** In order to maintain physical distance between staff and students, we will continue to use smaller cohorts and maintain lower capacities in the classrooms. All desks will continue to have shields and individuals will remain in their assigned areas. Stickers ensuring proper spacing 3 to 6 feet will remain on the floors at entrance and common areas such as the stairwells and the cafeteria. To ensure that the appropriate space is maintained.

**C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette** Staff and students will continue to verbal and written material that explains the importance of washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Each class will have a schedule for hand washing and sanitizing at specific times of the day. Hand sanitizer is available to all students, staff and visitors.

**D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:** Bio-ionization units are used to clean the air in classrooms, halls and offices. the abovementioned areas are cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis. High traffic areas such as door knobs are cleaned every hour. Once a week, the buildings receive a deep cleaning which includes the use of disinfectants and ultraviolet sanitizers.

**E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments:** Contact tracing and quarantine is done in accordance to the guidelines set in place by the CDC and the Newark Health Department by the Covid Testing Company. UHCS reports each confirmed case to the County Office.

**F. Diagnostic and screening testing:** Rapid Covid testing is performed for all staff at the school each week. In the event that there is an exposure, PCR testing is done for all students and their families as well as employees who may have come in contact with Covid 19.

**G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible:** Covid vaccination locations are shared with all staff and eligible students.

**H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies:** In accordance with the goals and objectives of the IEP for each student with a disability, we will ensure all PPE standards, regulations and guidelines are maintained and implemented with fidelity.

## 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 **Addressing Student Academic Needs**

- K-8 students will participate in beginning of the year assessments, such as iReady. Assessments, which will allow us to know if the students are on grade level, below grade level, or above grade level in ELA and Math.
- Students will attend school in –person daily and staff will deliver in-person instruction daily.
- Each classroom teacher will create an individualized learning plan for each student based on their iReady Assessment grade level placement scores with the support of the school counselor who will create an RTI/Response to Intervention plan.
- Each student will be assigned My Path Personalized Learning to work on independently through iReady. Classroom teachers will monitor student progress.
- Classroom teachers will work with students in small groups to provide guided reading and literacy development.

- Students will receive individualized and small group tutoring from instructional assistants and support staff in ELA and Math. Classroom teachers will provide lesson plans to the instructional assistants and support staff to work with the students during tutoring.
- Students with excessive absenteeism and who have been struggling academically during the 2020-2021 school year will have an opportunity to attend the UHCS summer learning and enrichment program. This opportunity will be extended to all students. A special gifted and talented program will also be instituted during the summer learning and enrichment program to support students who are above grade level.
- For the 2021-2022 school year, the Reading and Math Specialist and the Gifted and Talented Teachers will provide additional enrichment and academic support. The goal is for this support to be intentionally scheduled and to take place directly in the students' natural learning environment.
- Provide opportunities for instructional staff to collaborate across grade levels by meeting weekly in Focus Groups to research new modalities in education, to work in small groups to conduct educationally researched based book studies, as well as to meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities.
- Parents will have an opportunity to sign their child up to participate in extended day programming, such as after care. During Extended Day students will receive homework help and tutoring.
- ESL Specialist will coordinate with the teachers and school counselors to support ELL students.
- The Director of Special Services and School Social Worker will coordinate with Special Education Teachers, the school counselor, and the school principal to support students with IEP's.

### **Addressing Student and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health, and Other Needs**

- The School Counselor will be available to support students who have been affected by COVID-19 and the pandemic, students who are newly enrolled in the school, students exhibiting extreme behaviors, students who may be affected by grief and loss, etc.
- School wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support will be put into practice. All students will be taught behavior expectations and strategies.
- Classroom teachers will complete daily and weekly behavior logs to monitor and document student behavior. Student behavior will also be documented in PowerSchool. This will help to support putting an RTI plan in place for students who can benefit from behavior improvement.
- Each month school wide, the Lower School will focus on a character education theme, such as respect, excellence, accountability, caring, and honesty. Teachers and instructional staff will use literacy development opportunities to support character development instruction.
- Intentional opportunities for student voice will be implemented. Students will have an opportunity to attend and participate in classroom morning meetings, students will participate in center based learning, students will work together in collaborative groups in order to encourage positive discussion that contributes to the overall classroom learning environment.

- Student classroom leaders will be assigned monthly. The goal is for each student in the classroom to have an opportunity to serve as a classroom leader.
- Staff members have an opportunity to participate in the Employee Assistance Program through Rutgers.
- Attendance Counseling will support students and families will visit and check-ins and resources to improve attendance.
- School District also partners with Lloyd and Lloyd for mental health support for students.
- Staff members will have an opportunity to participate and attend self- care workshops and team building activities.
- Staff members will have an opportunity to help participate in the planning for re-opening by working on committees.
- The Attendance Office will work closely with the students and parents to monitor attendance and to put strategies in place along with the school counselor to help prevent excessive absenteeism.

### **Addressing Student Health and Food Services**

- Students and parents will work closely with the school nurse to address any health concerns.
- The Parent Coordinator and School Nurse will design programs to promote the well- being of families and the whole child.
- All students will have the opportunity to participate in the Food and Nutritional 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)** The plan will be posted on the district's website and a variety of stakeholders were engaged in the creation of the plan.

**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 will be translated into Spanish and other languages as requested by the parents. The Plan will be posted in the school's Main Office and shared with families during orientation.