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:** Atlantic County Vocational School District

**Date (06/21/2021):**

**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.

**The Atlantic County Vocational School District will follow the guidance provided by the CDC and the New Jersey Departments of Health and Education to maintain the health and safety of students and staff. As the aforementioned guidance is subject to change based on regional and state health conditions, elements of this plan may be revised as necessary.**

#### A. Universal and correct wearing of masks:

- Students, staff, and all visitors to school buildings are required to wear face coverings at all times.
- Students will be expected to wear masks while riding the school bus, in academic and CTE classes, and when moving around the school buildings.
● Students may remove masks during lunch periods once they are seated and outside when social distancing of at least six feet can be maintained.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)
   ● Physical distancing will be maintained to the maximum extent practicable based on the NJDOH COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix.
   ● Classrooms will be arranged with desks/chairs placed according to the recommendations contained in NJDOH COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix.
   ● Cafeterias and other areas where students eat will be arranged according to the recommendations contained in the NJDOH COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix.
   ● Cohorts may be utilized if the NJDOH COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix requires six feet of physical distancing between students in classrooms and the cafeteria.
   ● Electronic Signage in common areas will be used to inform students of social distancing requirements.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:
   ● Multiple announcements will be made daily to remind staff and students of hand hygiene.
   ● Every classroom will have a wall mounted hand sanitizer dispenser.
   ● Disposable disinfecting wipes will be available to all students.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:
   ● All HVAC Filters have been updated
   ● Air Purification Ionizers are being installed in all HVAC Units
   ● Older HVAC rooftop units are being replaced
   ● Develop a schedule and process for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially for frequently touched surfaces. (e.g. door knobs, light switches, handrails)
   ● Clean and sanitize bathrooms between use as much as possible. Limit the number of bathrooms in use throughout the building.
   ● All drinking fountains converted to no-touch bottle fill units
   ● Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection Sanitizing Protocols
   ● Hand sanitizer will be available in every classroom and throughout the building.
   ● Disposable disinfecting wipes will be distributed to all staff
• Every area will be Bio-blasted at the end of every day.
• Bathrooms will be sanitized every night.
• Develop procedures for cleaning and disinfecting in the event someone is identified as COVID-19 positive.
• Provide additional training to staff responsible for cleaning and sanitizing.
  Providing barriers in specific locations (cafeteria, offices, therapy rooms)

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
  • School nurses will notify the Atlantic County Health Department if a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19 and cooperate with all contact tracing efforts as directed by the Health Department.
  • Student attendance will be completed in each class and a list can be generated from the student information system to trace student contact throughout the day.
  • Student rosters for each bus will be required from each transportation provider.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing:
  • Students and all school employees will be screened upon arrival to school building or work location for COVID-19 symptoms.
  • Noncontact facial temperature detection scanners and handheld thermometers will be used at each entrance.
  • Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.
  • Designated entrances must be used by students and staff
  • If staff presents symptoms or a temperature 100.4 or above, they will be instructed to go home immediately.
  • If students present symptoms or a temperature 100.4 or above they will be escorted to the nurse’s office for further evaluation and possible quarantine. If quarantined in the nurse’s office, they will be held there until they are picked up by a parent.
  • Students and staff who are sent home as a result of exhibiting symptoms during a health screening will need to provide a medical note to return to school or work.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible
  • Staff have been provided with vaccination information and locations.
  • Assistance was provided to staff to schedule vaccination appointments.
School Nurses are providing vaccination information to students and families.
Community-based vaccination sites are listed on the school website.

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

- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies are highly individualized. The school will continue to develop accommodations and plans (504, IEP, I&RS Action Plans, Health Plans, Evacuation Plans, etc.) based on individual student needs and provide accommodations with respect to the health and safety policies.

**Examples of Accommodations:**
- Accommodations for students with regard to wearing masks (i.e., specialized masks, mask breaks)
- Accommodations for students with regard to teacher masks (i.e., clear masks for lip reading, use of FM system to assist with masks)
- Accommodations for physical distancing for students in need of 1:1 support that requires close proximity (i.e., portable barriers)
- Accommodations for student meetings (in-person and virtual formats available)
- Accommodations for related services (in-person and virtual format available)
- Accommodations for evaluations/assessments (i.e., use of clear masks, portable barriers)

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 Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports (1000 character limit). Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Culture and Climate

In addition to taking the steps listed in the Health and Safety Guidelines section to protect students’ and educators’ physical health, the impact of social isolation on both educators and students must be considered. School officials are not mandated to develop protocols for these elements as these elements are not “anticipated minimum standards” in the NJDOE Guidance. However, the NJDOE recommends school officials consider the following elements while developing the Board’s Plan. The Restart Committee included the following academic, social and behavioral supports in the Plan:
SEL will be critical in re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning.

**ACVSD SEL Protocols and Resources:**

**Staff/Training**
- SEL training will be provided to Guidance, Child Study Team (CST) and Administration in August.
- SEL training will be available to staff on a voluntary basis.
- Supportive personnel will communicate and collaborate to ensure services are provided to students in need.

**Assessment**
- Use of an assessment/survey/tool to determine staff and student needs and assist with infusing SEL into the schedule/classrooms.

**Contact/Connections**
- Ongoing student contact by Guidance and CST departments, as a means of checking in and providing resources and support (i.e., google meet/chat, emails, and phone calls).
- Ongoing parent contact by Guidance and CST departments to introduce and reinforce support (i.e., google meet/chat, emails, and phone calls).

**In-Person Support**
- Students will have access to supportive personnel, as needed (i.e., guidance counselors, CST, School Nurse, Substance Abuse Counselor (SAC), etc. relative to SEL supports
- All staff will receive training to provide SEL supports.
- All students will have access to guidance counselors by program who can better support academic needs
- All students will have access to after school/ evening/ Saturday tutoring across academic subject areas to assist with remedial concerns and/ or new course content and the organizational approaches to a new school year.
- Incoming freshmen will participate in the Guided Assistance in Math, English and Science (G.A.M.E.S.) program, a targeted approach to ensure scaffolds for students returning to in-person learning after 18 months on remote/ hybrid, coupled with the transition to high school. In, three counselors will oversee the freshmen caseload, one specific to the Hawk Center, a resource center for Help in Academics, Wellness, and Keeping Students on Track, including, but not limited to mentorship, character education, and small group support sessions.
Virtual Support
- Websites, Google Classrooms, social media posts, mass emails, and Parent University will continue to offer resources and links to applicable resources for varying school departments.

Resources
- Resources (academic, emotional, community based, etc.) will be available on the ACIT website, guidance counselor google pages, emailed to students and families and shared via individual contact with students and families.
- All Counselors will have personal Google Classroom pages with links to resources.
- Referrals will be made to outside agencies, when necessary.
- Use of the BASE Education program (SEL curriculum modules).

College & Career Readiness
- Google website created to offer resources for students & virtual individual/group sessions for post-secondary and/or career planning.
- Classroom guidance lessons will continue- In-person/Virtual format, to be determined.
- Bi-weekly updates from College and Career Readiness Counselor (CCRC) counselor to be posted to Parent University along with applicable links.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
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.

ACVSD MTSS Protocols and Resources:
- Tier 1
  - SEL Training for Support Staff (Guidance, CST) this summer- SEL Team
  - Staff Training available for SEL (voluntary basis) to assist with supporting students within the classrooms
  - Access to supportive personnel (outreach by Guidance and CST to communicate and inform students/families of support available)
  - Resources emailed to students and families and accessible on website
  - Use of assessment/tool/survey to determine SEL needs (communicating with BASE as they are in process of creating one)
- Tier 2
o Individual/Group Counseling with SAC/Social Worker and counselors to address student specific needs
o Use of BASE curriculum to meet needs of students (based on results of assessment tool) - within counseling, assigned to students independently, and/or possibly used within classrooms (based on licenses)

- Tier 3
  o Significant use of BASE curriculum
  o SAC/Social Worker will case manage students in need of this level of support, and provide wrap around services for students/families (referrals to outside agencies) to ensure intensive supports are in place to address the SEL needs of the student.

**Wraparound Supports**

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.

**ACVSD Protocols and Resources: Wraparound Supports**

- PerformCare
- Clinical Counselors/Therapists (i.e., AtlantiCare)
- DCPP
- Psychiatric Intervention Program (AC PIP)

**Food Service and Distribution**

School meals are critical to student health and well-being, especially for low-income students. The NJDOE considers it a moral imperative to ensure the seamless and continuous feeding of students during all phases of school reopening.

**ACVSD Protocols and Resources: Food Service Distribution**

- In the event student instruction is partially remote, students who qualify for free or reduced meals, will be offered meals to take home at the end of the school day in which they are present in school. Families may contact the school to pick up meals when the student is on remote learning also.
- The district has a partnership with the Atlantic County Food Bank through the Atlantic County Special Services School and offers food to families as needed throughout the school year.
- The district participates in the “Let Us Eat Please” Summer feeding program in conjunction with the Community Food Bank.
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 District Pandemic Response Team composed of parents, Board of Education members, teachers, school nurses, food service and facilities personnel as well as district and school administrators met to develop the District Plan on June 3, 2021. Public comment was received at the Board of Education meeting held on June 21, 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 will be translated to Spanish with additional translations available upon request. The Plan will be posted on the district website which utilizes a content management system that is compliant with web accessibility standards including access by the visually impaired using screen readers.