



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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: Hoboken Dual Language Charter School (HoLa)**

**Date: June 23, 2021**

## **1. Maintaining Health and Safety**

For each mitigation strategy listed below, 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 / face coverings

- Consistent with current guidance, students, staff and authorized visitors are required to wear face coverings in the school buildings at all times, including during after school programming. The exception to the rule is while eating lunch, at which time students are separated by 6 feet in a well ventilated room. Staff members are provided with masks and optional face shields, and extra masks are available in case a student or visitor forgets to bring one.
- Signage is posted throughout the building regarding the requirement for proper face covering, and the school nurse ensures that staff and students alike are informed about proper usage.
- In planning for the fall, HoLa will continue to follow recommendations by the CDC, the NJDOH and the NJDOE regarding the use of face coverings and social distancing. Vaccine access and community data will also inform decision-making.

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

- HoLa has adhered to the recommended physical distancing requirements over the course of the school year: 6 feet when the region was in high activity level, then 3 feet when the regional activity level shifted to moderate in May 2021. Students have maintained 6 feet while eating, regardless of regional activity level. CDC guidance, NJDOH and NJDOE recommendations, as well as vaccine access and community data, will continue to inform decision-making around social distancing when students are masked and unmasked.

### C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The school nurse leads training with staff, students and families around best practices in handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
  - Students and staff are expected to wash hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitize at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. Classrooms have incorporated the practice of handwashing and sanitizing throughout the day and during transition times. The school has purchased handwashing and hand sanitizing stations to increase capacity and access for students.
  - Students and staff are instructed to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing, to dispose of tissues promptly, and to wash hands or use a hand sanitizer after touching their mouths or noses.
- Tissues and hand sanitizing stations, mostly hands-free, with alcohol-based hand sanitizer are set up around entrance/egress points, throughout the building and at shared contact points (e.g. elevator, handrails, etc.).
- Hands-free soap dispensers have been placed in bathrooms, and faucets are hands-free.

### D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

#### Facilities Cleaning Practices

- HoLa has developed a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and between usage by different students and staff. Disinfecting products are EPA-approved for use against COVID-19, and used according to manufacturer instructions.
- Bathrooms are sanitized throughout the day. Bathroom capacity has been reduced so that students are able to maintain as much distance as possible.

#### Air Quality and Ventilation

- We have upgraded the HVAC system in one facility, and had the HVAC filters cleaned in both buildings. We have also purchased HEPA air purifiers for all classrooms and offices. Doors and windows are maintained open in all classrooms and offices to the extent practicable.

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

- HoLa administrators and school nurses are provided with information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping our school community safe from the spread of contagious disease. HoLa has developed internal contact tracing procedures, and collaborates with the local health department whenever a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID, or is suspected to have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, as required.

#### F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Students and employees are required to quarantine according to CDC guidance if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, or if contact tracing determines that they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 are safely and respectfully isolated from others. The school follows Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. The symptomatic person and supervising staff member are provided with PPE. Special consideration is given for the protection of staff members, such as school nurses and custodians, who are in frequent contact with students or who handle waste materials. Face shields, masks, gloves and K95 or N95 masks are available to them.
- If HoLa becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in one of our school facilities tests positive for COVID-19, a member of the HoLa administration immediately notifies local health officials of a confirmed case, and conducts initial internal contact tracing while maintaining confidentiality within the school community. The school then follows guidance from the Department of Health regarding communication, cleaning, contact tracing and possible closure. HoLa follows NJDOH and CDC recommendations in determining quarantine requirements, and the implications for sanitizing the facility.

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

- Considerations for students with disabilities have been intrinsic to all of HoLa's planning for remote and hybrid instruction, and for returning to school in person. HoLa continues to meet the needs of students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, in alignment with student IEPs and 504 plans. Students who receive special education support or related services have been provided with the option to receive their interventions in person at the school building, even when the school was in hybrid mode. With full-time onsite instruction, special education supports have reverted to being fully implemented in person and on site.

- Evaluations are conducted in person, while IEP meetings are currently held via Zoom to minimize visitors to the building. All services would revert to remote instruction should the need arise.

## 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)
- Meals continue to be available through our school meal program for both remote and in-person students throughout the school year and during the summer, regardless of whether the school is in remote, hybrid or in-person mode.
  - HoLa has engaged in thoughtful planning around the impact of the pandemic on the well-being of our staff and students alike, including its impact on student learning. We have expanded counseling services, and conducted in-service training to ensure our staff is prepared to identify and support the social-emotional needs of our students.
  - HoLa's Multi Tiered System of Supports will continue to provide academic, social and emotional assistance to all students with demonstrated need, and we have established the Student Support and Academic Success initiative for the 2021-22 school year, which coordinates the services of basic skills teachers, special education teachers, ESL/SSL teachers, guidance team members and the school psychologist to provide wrap-around support tailored to students' needs.
  - We plan to resume aftercare and in-person extracurricular offerings in September 2021.

## 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)
- In late May 2021, HoLa circulated an overview of its plan for a safe return to in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year, including its approach and systems to address student health and safety, social-emotional wellbeing, and learning loss due to the pandemic.
  - In early June 2021, HoLa held a Town Hall event for staff and families to discuss this plan and solicit feedback, questions and comments from our constituents. Updates will continue to be provided through school wide communications, in our school newsletter, and at monthly Board of Trustee meetings.

- Additionally, our annual parent survey was disseminated at the end of June 2021 to solicit feedback that will inform ongoing planning for the 2021-22 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)

- The planning document was provided as a clearly organized PDF document attached to a schoolwide email to all staff and families.
- Our Town Hall event - like all HoLa events - was ADA accessible, and Spanish-speaking staff members were on hand to discuss the plan with attendees.

C. Briefly describe any guidance, professional learning and technical assistance opportunities the LEA will make available to its schools. (1000 character limit)

- HoLa provides our faculty and staff with extensive professional development opportunities during each school year, including two full weeks of training and planning prior to the first day of school and during weekly staff meetings during the school year. During 2021 summer professional development (and ongoing over the course of the year), major areas of focus will include assessing and addressing learning loss, identifying and supporting students' social-emotional needs both in and out of the classroom, health and safety protocols, restorative justice and positive discipline practices, culturally responsive instruction, and cultivating an equitable and inclusive school community.