

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

This document is intended to meet the federal statutory requirement that, within 30 days of receiving ARP ESSER LEA allocation (anticipated May 24th), an LEA shall publish an LEA Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services, which is often called a “school district reopening plan.”

Note, if an LEA developed a plan before *The American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA) was enacted on 03/11/2021 that complied with the federal statutory requirements for public posting and comments but does not meet all of the requirements below, then the LEA must revise its plan no later than six months after receiving ARP ESSER funds

For further context, please reference ARPA (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text>) or the Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf>).

I. General Information

1. LEA Name: SAU41
2. Date of Publication: December 22, 2021

II. Transparency and Accessibility

1. This plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services was published and made publicly available online here: http://c674469e-37ee-4fac-9c96-08f76eeb02ac.filesusr.com/ugd/5a59e1_5b78b9503a0a410eb7d849d6dc1589df.pdf

Description: In April 2020, SAU41 Administration in conjunction with various stakeholder groups began developing a comprehensive Road Map to Reopening our Schools Plan. In sum, nearly 60 stakeholders including teachers, support staff, nurses, administrators, parents, community members and public health partners participated in the development of the plan. The plan incorporated research based public health strategies from various local, state, and federal agencies including Nashua Public Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, the New Hampshire Nurses’ Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In August of 2020, the plan was presented and voted on publicly by the Hollis, Brookline, and Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Districts.

2. Before making the plan publicly available, the LEA sought public comment on the plan and took such comments into account in the development of the plan (please check one).

Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description: A draft reopening plan was presented to each of the Boards in early August. Members of both the Hollis and Brookline communities were encouraged to attend the publicly held meetings to provide feedback. Parent input surveys were administered to all families of students in SAU41 in both the spring and summer of 2020. Feedback solicited from both the Board and community was incorporated in the final version of the plan.

3. The plan is in an understandable and uniform format (please check one):

Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description: The plan was intentionally developed in a manner that made it easy to understand and followed a uniform format. When appropriate, links were made available to the guidance documents that helped to inform the creation of the plan. The plan is categorized by the following focus areas: instructional, technology, health and safety, human resources, facilities, student services, food service,

extracurricular, and transportation. Each of these focus areas had a taskforce that was comprised of stakeholders who had knowledge and expertise in that respective area.

4. The plan, to the extent practicable, is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated (please check one):

Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description: The plan is written in language that makes it easy to understand. While creating the plan, great care was taken to avoid technical language from the fields of public health and education. For ease of access, the plan was prominently displayed in the front page of the SAU41 website, which is ADA compliant.

5. The plan, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, is provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent (please check one):

Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description: The plan is available on the SAU41 website. SAU41 recently redesigned their website to ensure full compliance with all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Translation services are available upon request and available via Google Translate.

III. Health and Safety

1. How the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff:

Description during SY20-21: SAU41 instituted research based public health measures as defined by local, state, and federal agencies. This included but was not limited to social distancing, enhanced sanitizing practices, mask wearing, modifications to the physical plant and building based procedures, staff training, creation of a community public health stakeholder group and participation in the weekly partner call with the Department of Health and Human Services.

Description during SY21-22: SAU41 will continue to implement research-based public health best practices. SAU41 will continue to follow written guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services. SAU41 will continue to monitor local, state, and national COVID-19 data to make well informed adjustments to our reopening plan.

2. The LEA's adoption of the following CDC health and safety strategies are described below:
(Note federal regulation on this plan requires such reporting, but does not require adoption of CDC safety recommendations. The NH DOE recognizes schools will implement localized safety measures based on the guidance provided by the CDC, NH Public Health, and local public health officials.)

- a. Universal and correct wearing of masks:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☐ Somewhat: ☒ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: Universal mask wearing was a requirement for both staff, students, and visitors during the 2020-2021 school year. Time was devoted at the beginning of the school year to train both staff and students regarding proper mask wearing techniques. Masks were made available to all staff, students, and visitors upon entering each school building.

For the 2021-2022 school year, mask wearing was required in the Brookline School District and in the Hollis School District. Mask wearing was optional in the Hollis Brookline School District. However, the Superintendent reserved the right to implement activity-based mask wearing where appropriate based on the formal reopening plan approved by the Boards. In mid-January, 2022, the Superintendent intends to move to mask optional for both the Brookline School District and the Hollis School District while reserving the right to implement an activity-based or circumstance-based mask requirement when needed.

- b. Physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding and modifying facilities):

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☐ Somewhat: ☒ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: During the 2020-2021 school year, SAU41 observed social distancing of 3 to 6 feet in all instructional spaces. To the greatest extent possible, all schools followed a cohort grouping model. Several modifications were made to the physical plant to allow for physical distancing including the elimination and replacement of furniture in classrooms and appropriate signage in all common areas and hallways.

For the 2021-2022 school year, SAU41 will restrict group seating within the classroom environment on an effort to maintain 3 feet of spacing. The 3 feet of spacing rule will not necessarily apply in the cafeteria, hallways, or other congregate settings outside of the classroom. Additional exceptions will be made at the secondary level where students currently have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Furniture previously removed will be returned to the classroom setting as deemed appropriate by school administrators.

c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: During the 2020-2021 school year, staff members built time into their classroom schedule to allow for students to wash and disinfect their hands. Disinfection stations were established in all common areas of the school. Teachers were supplied with soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes. Developmentally appropriate signage was added to all 6 schools to promote healthy hygiene practices such as handwashing. This practice will remain in effect for the 2021-2022 school year.

d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: Significant financial resources were allocated to maintaining healthy facilities during the 2020-2021 school year. Additional custodial staff were hired, electrostatic sprayers were utilized to disinfect surfaces, custodial staff received comprehensive professional development in sanitizing surfaces, teachers were encouraged to leave classroom windows open to help improve ventilation, indoor air quality tests were performed, and a comprehensive HVAC evaluation was conducted in all 6 school buildings. Additionally, to achieve increased ACPH, ventilation units were active three hours prior to school opening and inactive three hours after closing. These practices will remain in place for the 2021-2022 school year. Information collected from the HVAC evaluation will be used to drive future decision making regarding capital improvement expenditures.

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

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: SAU41 principals and nurses worked collaboratively with the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct contact tracing investigations when a positive COVID-19 case was identified. Such investigations resulted in little to no community-based transmission of COVID-19 within the school setting. SAU41 will continue to partner with the Department of Health and Human Services for the 2021-2022 school year to complete contact tracing investigations as needed.

f. Diagnostic and screening testing:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: SAU41 collaborated with local health care partner Convenient MD in an effort to streamline testing for both students and staff. As a result, students and staff were able to receive antigen testing results with 15 minutes of testing and PCR test results within 24 to 48 hours of testing. SAU41 worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain a case of at-home rapid COVID-19 test kits for each school building to distribute to families who identified a need for one. Site based testing was not put in place in SAU41 due to the wide availability of both test sites and at home test kits.

g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: In partnership with Walgreens and the Department of Health and Human Services, SAU41 held a regional vaccination clinic that was made available to all Hollis,

Brookline, Milford, Mason, Amherst, and Mont Vernon educators in both the public and private school settings. SAU41 facilitated the local community-based vaccination clinics to offer both first time vaccines to adults and children as well as boosters for eligible adults in both Hollis and Brookline.

- h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies:

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: SAU41 has gone to great lengths to ensure access and equity training to all students identified with disabilities during the pandemic. This included conducting compensatory education meetings for all students in the first month of school to determine if students had made meaningful progress on their goals. Additional staff were hired specifically to work with students with disabilities that were not able to access their education from the physical school building.

For the 2021-2022 school year, SAU41 has worked closely with families of students with disabilities who were not able to return to the physical school environment to ensure that they are able to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

- i. Coordination with state and local health officials (please check one):

During SY20-21 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

During SY21-22 (check one): Yes: ☒ Somewhat: ☐ No: ☐

Description of both SYs: SAU41 has worked closely with both Nashua Public Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. This includes participating in the weekly DHHS partner calls as well as working collaboratively with Nashua Public health and the Department of Health and Human Services to host an educator vaccination clinic in the spring of 2021.

IV. Continuity of Services

1. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing student academic needs:

Description during SY20-21: SAU41 was one of the only school districts to offer a full in-person option last spring (2020) to students with significant disabilities. SAU41 has a robust Response to Intervention (RtI) model that continues to: identify students with learning gaps, provide targeted intervention, and monitor ongoing student progress. Additionally, SAU41 will transition their Response to Intervention (RtI) model to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) which addresses the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

Description during SY21-22: Through our annual school district budget and available ESSER funds, SAU41 has committed additional resources to our RtI program that will assist in identifying potential learning loss and gaps in students' content knowledge. The emphasis of SAU41 will be reducing learning gaps, providing necessary learning supports for vulnerable populations, providing staff training to emphasize student well-being, and encouraging programs that prove to be effective for achievement gains, including non-traditional opportunities.

2. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing student social, emotional, mental, and other health needs, which may include student health and food services:

Description during SY20-21: 2019-2020 school year SAU41 implemented the social and emotional learning program, Choose Love. The prep work from the prior school year allowed for a fluid concentration of the program into the 20-21 school year. This program has been implemented with

fidelity in all 6 schools and offered both a personalized and community approach to social emotional learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Description during SY21-22: SAU41 has continued with the Choose Love program and is currently exploring additional resources to support the social and emotional wellbeing of both students and staff. Schools have building level committees to investigate programs such as advisory (high school) and Wolf Pack Wall of Honor (nominations by both adults and peers at CSDA).

3. The LEA has provided continuity of services in addressing staff social, emotional, mental, and other health needs:

Description during SY20-21: Staff well-being during the pandemic has been paramount. Staff have been provided with early release Fridays to allow for the opportunity for staff to collaborate and support one another. Additionally, changes had been made to the supervision and evaluation model that both reduced the number and narrowed the scope of formal classroom observations. In conjunction with local parent groups, staff have been provided with various appreciation opportunities throughout the school year.

Description during SY21-22: Staff well-being has continued to be a focus during the 2021-2022 school year. SAU41 is currently exploring a variety of wellness opportunities for staff. This summer the SAU41 Administrative Team read "Putting Teachers First" by Brad Johnson. Employees have been encouraged to access additional wellness resources available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) from HealthTrust. The District has also implemented wellness activities during professional development days.

V. Plan Review

1. The LEA will meet the federal regulatory requirement to review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023 (the award period including the Tydings period). (Note an LEA that developed a plan before ARPA was enacted on 03/11/2021 that complied with the federal statutory requirements for public posting and comments but does not meet all of the requirements above must revise its plan no later than six months after the LEA receives LEA ESSER funds.)

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

Description: SAU41 recognizes that the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan needs to be a living and breathing document. The document will be reviewed monthly by the SAU41 Leadership team and adjustments will be made based upon guidance from local, state, and federal agencies.

2. In doing so, the LEA will meet the federal statutory requirement to seek public input and take such input into account in determining whether to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

Description: It is the intention of SAU41 to continue to seek input from the public on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.

3. In doing so, the LEA will also meet the federal regulatory requirement to address CDC safety recommendations and, if the CDC has updated its safety recommendations at the time the LEA is revising its plan, each of the updated CDC safety recommendations.

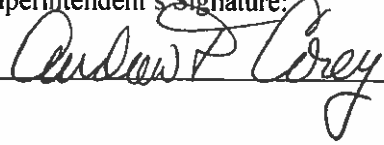
(Note federal regulation on this plan requires such reporting, but does not require adoption of CDC safety recommendations. The NH DOE recognizes schools will implement localized safety measures based on the guidance provided by the CDC, NH Public Health, and local public health officials.)

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

Description: SAU41 will continue to implement the guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services when making adjustments to the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.

VI. Authorization

LEA Superintendent's Signature:

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Date:

12/23/21

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A. ARPA Statutory Excerpt

“(i) Safe return to in-person instruction.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency receiving funds under this section shall develop and make publicly available on the local educational agency’s website, not later than 30 days after receiving the allocation of funds described in paragraph (d)(1), a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.

(2) COMMENT PERIOD.—Before making the plan described in paragraph (1) publicly available, the local educational agency shall seek public comment on the plan and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.

(3) PREVIOUS PLANS.—If a local educational agency has developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction before the date of enactment of this Act that meets the requirements described in paragraphs (1) and (2), such plan shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements under this subsection.”

Appendix B. Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER Excerpt

“(3) *LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services.*

(a) An LEA must describe in its plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services—

(i) how it 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.

(B) Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (*e.g.* use of cohorts/ podding).

(C) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

(D) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.

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

(F) Diagnostic and screening testing.

(G) Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.

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

(I) Coordination with State and local health officials.

(ii) how it will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students’ academic needs and students’ and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

(b) (i) During the period of the ARP ESSER award established in section 2001(a) of the ARP Act, an LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in person instruction and continuity of services.

(ii) In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account.

(iii) If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any such policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations.

(c) If an LEA developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i)(1) and (2) of the ARP Act but does not address all the requirements in paragraph (a), the LEA must, pursuant to paragraph (b), revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds to meet the requirements in paragraph (a).

(d) An LEA’s plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services must be—

(i) In an understandable and uniform format;

(ii) To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and

(iii) Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.”