

Educational Services Commission of Morris County Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Educational Services Commission of Morris County

Date: June 1, 2021

Introduction and Background

In March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides additional funding through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and addresses the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students.

The Educational Services Commission of Morris County has continuously addressed the impact of the pandemic on the learning of our students. The ESC operated its Central Park School in person during the 2020-2021 school year and will continue to operate in person during the 2021-2022 school year starting with the Extended School Year program in July. While the ESC receives very little funding from the sources indicated above, we are committed to providing the safest and most effective program for our special needs students. Since the ESC only has special needs students the health and safety requirements outlined below are developed in conjunction with each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

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

Central Park School will comply with all face covering requirements based on CDC, DOH and NJDOE guidance. For September, face coverings will be required for all staff and students in schools unless exempted by medical documentation or IEP requirements.

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

Central Park School will continue to follow DOH and NJDOE guidelines and executive orders regarding social distancing and will update as guidance changes. Physical distancing will be maintained, as feasible. In rooms where physical distancing recommended by the DOH/CDC and NJDOE would be impractical, plexiglass dividers or other barriers will be provided.

Other procedures include:

- Arranging desks in rows all forward facing maintaining the required distance between. When the guidelines for CDC and DOH distancing standards cannot be met, barriers will be used.
- Reminding students and staff of distancing protocols through daily messages and signage.

- It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of an individual child, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

C. Hand washing and respiratory etiquette

Hand sanitizing stations with 70% alcohol hand sanitizers are located in each classroom, at entrances and exits of buildings, and in cafeterias. Students are required to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before and after eating, before and after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing. If washing with soap and water is not possible, hand sanitizer should be used. Signage is prominent throughout buildings to remind students of the hand washing protocol. Teachers will reinforce the proper protocol of hand washing after coughing or sneezing. If hand washing is not immediately available, students will be instructed to use classroom hand sanitizer. Students will be instructed to sneeze or cough into their elbow. If a student or staff member is sick, they should stay home.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Central Park School is completely retrofitted with the CASPR continuous air and surface pathogen reduction system (CASPRGROUP.COM). CASPR is a hospital grade system that is located in each classroom ventilation systems for heat and air conditioning. CASPR has also been installed in the other building ventilation systems throughout the building.

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

Central Park School has isolation spaces. Symptomatic students will remain in isolation with supervision until picked up by an authorized adult. Central Park School will follow current DOH guidance for illness reporting, contact tracing, quarantining, and readmittance. Methods to assist in contact tracing include class lists, assigned staff, schedules, and daily attendance. Upon learning of a positive case, the school nurse will relay that to district administration who communicates with the DOH. The school nurse, with the DOH and school principal will contact trace and notify close contacts. Notifications will be shared when positive cases are identified. Notifications will not include identifying information and will be consistent with privacy laws. All protocols will be reviewed regularly to ensure they follow updated guidance. Students and staff will follow current DOH guidelines based on COVID-19 test results and vaccination status.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Central Park School promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; and signs and messages in and around the school building. Screening questions will be reviewed daily by all staff and parents. Students will sanitize their hands when entering the classroom and as appropriate throughout the day.

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

Staff has been provided information of various opportunities for vaccinations organized by district administration. The district will communicate vaccination opportunities to all eligible persons.

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

All students who attend Central Park School have disabilities, which required strict adherence to the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis. Central Park School provides the staff with appropriate professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodation tools made available through technology-based formats.

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.

Each student who attends the ESC Central Park School has an IEP, which must be strictly adhered to. The IEP is developed with the sending district, the parents and the teachers, therapists and Principal of Central Park School. Failure to comply with all of the tenets of the IEP results in non-compliance and is subject to due process hearings and remediation.

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.

Each parent and sending district representatives were contacted to discuss the Central Park School plan for the 2021-2022 school. All comments by parents were reviewed and where accommodations for individual students were required, the Central Park School noted these accommodations in the daily plan for each student.

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.

Each parent was given the opportunity during the annual review process in the spring of 2021 to review the IEP to assure that all COVID-19 protocols were discussed and written into each student's IEP.