

## **American Rescue Plan ESSER Application (Use of Funds Plan)**

American Rescue Plan funds have been made available to RSU 12. This is a summary of how the funds allocated to RSU 12 will be utilized.

The SAU will reserve at least 20 percent of its total ARP ESSER funds to address the lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions and ensure that those interventions such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, extended school year programs, or other evidence-based interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care).

The remaining SAU ARP ESSER funds may be used for a wide range of activities to address needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic, including any activity authorized by the ESEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), or Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins CTE). Specifically, ARP ESSER funds may be used to develop strategies and implement public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on reopening and operating schools to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, as well as:

- coordinating preparedness and response efforts with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19;
- training and professional development on sanitizing and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases;
- purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the SAU's facilities;
- repairing and improving school facilities to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards;
- improving indoor air quality;
- addressing the needs of children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth;
- developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs;
- planning for or implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students and providing technology for online learning;
- purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, connectivity, assistive technology, and adaptive equipment) for students that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including students from low-income families and children with disabilities;
- providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence based full-service community schools and the hiring of counselors;

- planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs;
- addressing learning loss; and
- other activities that are necessary to maintain operation of and continuity of and services, including continuing to employ existing or hiring new LEA and school staff.

RSU 12 sent a community-wide survey out to stakeholders in order to have meaningful consultation and receive input from the community. The survey was sent directly to parents/guardians, students, staff, staff unions as well as to community members via our alert app and social media accounts. We received meaningful data and input from this effort. Consultation took place with the Teacher and Support Staff Association Leadership and more input was collected. Consultation was also conducted with the Administrative team which included building principals, our special ed directors, our homeless liaison, our ELL director, and our social workers. The results of the survey and other direct input were discussed with the RSU 12 Finance Committee during a public meeting. During this public finance meeting, the RSU 12 Finance Committee made a motion with recommendations to the full RSU 12 Board of Directors to include certain components in the development of the ARP grant. During the RSU 12 Board of Directors meeting, there was an opportunity for public comment on the recommendations. Some public comments were made at the meeting. The RSU 12 Board of Directors unanimously approved the recommendations by the RSU 12 Finance Committee.

The plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services was made available publicly and described most recently during the August 2021 Board of Director's meeting. Please note that RSU 12 returned to safe in-person learning FULL-TIME last year during the 2020-2021 school year. There was active public comment throughout the year last year about the plan and its revisions. During the most recent meeting in August 2021, Public Comment was held during this meeting. We had active participation from the public during this meeting. In particular, we had members of the public both for and against the wearing of masks. The RSU 12 Board of Directors plans to revisit the plan periodically as conditions change and at least every six months. I am certain the public will continue to be actively involved as revisions to the plan are proposed.

## **Projects**

### **1. High-quality tutoring**

RSU 12 will employ four Intervention Teachers who will work alongside our high quality Title I program in order to provide research-based interventions in reading and mathematics. Funds will be used to pay for interventionists who will work with students eligible for Title I services and who will deliver targeted supplemental instruction in Reading and/or Math as determined by student learning need. Staff will use research-based interventions and will formatively assess to monitor student progress towards learning goals. Professional development will be provided to support effective implementation of interventions.

**2. Additional Social Worker**

RSU 12 will hire an additional social worker in order to support the social and emotional health of PK-8 students in RSU 12. This will be a temporary, two-year position. The social worker will be hired as soon as the ESSER ARP use of funds application is approved.

**3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Funds from this project will be utilized to provide safety gear such as masks, cleaning supplies, and other types of PPE in order to maintain a clean and safe learning environment and provide mitigating layers of protection against COVID-19. Masks, enhanced cleaning products, gowns, hand sanitizer, plastic bags, space sanitizers, sanitizing supplies, sanitizing equipment, etc.

**4. Additional School Nursing Staff**

Funds from this project will be used to employ a school nurse for two years who will help the health team with medically challenged students, contact tracing, and coordinate our pool testing program.

**5. Outdoor Learning**

This project will address the need for outdoor learning spaces at our schools. The social distancing requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary for learning to happen both in and outside the confines of the school building. Teachers have used this opportunity to learn more about outdoor learning and we have seen surprising benefits from outdoor learning. This project will fund spaces for outdoor learning including hoop houses serving as a outdoor classrooms and gardens as well as other outdoor structures that will provide protection from the elements for outdoor learning. Construction supplies, hoop house ventilation equipment, and groundwork.

**6. Maintain Current Staff and Programs**

The COVID-19 Pandemic caused a significant drop in our student count. This drop-in student count resulted in a significant loss in general-purpose aid that we use to employ staff keep our programs intact. Funds from this project will maintain current staffing levels and programs for two years while we wait for our student enrollment to return to pre-pandemic totals. We will need current staffing levels and programs when the student enrollment numbers eventually rise back to normal. Current staffing will include teaching staff as well as support staff that are needed to be in place during the pandemic.

**7. Air Quality**

The purpose of this project is to continue to improve air quality in our schools. The project will install heat pumps in certain spaces within in the schools as well as UV systems to further improve the air quality and eliminate viruses, molds, and bacteria. These projects will begin as soon as this grant application is approved.

## **8. Improvement of Technology Networks**

This project will fund networking upgrades that are necessary within our buildings in order to be able to manage the increased volume of network traffic both in-person and remotely as a result of the implementation of one-to-one devices at all grade levels. These upgrades will take place over the course of two years as needed.

## **9. Transportation**

This project will address transportation needs around the district. All purchases and staffing will take place as soon as possible.

1. Funds from this project will address parking lot paving needs at one of our schools which has resulted from many more students being driven to school rather than taking the bus. Striping of the parking lot will also be funded. The school, which has a partial gravel parking area and access area, is not equipped to handle this level of daily traffic. Paving part of the parking lot and an access road is necessary due to COVID transportation needs.

2. Funds from this project will also be used to purchase two additional student transportation vans that are needed due to social distancing recommendations on buses. Some of our buses are overcrowded and distancing is impossible so we these vans will alleviate this problem.

3. Funds from this project will also be used to pay monitors for buses. School day staff will be paid to ride buses in order to monitor student mask wearing, assigned seating, hand sanitizing, and social distancing. This type of monitoring will reduce unnecessary quarantining. It is not possible for the bus driver to safely drive and monitor this level of student behavior.

4. Funds from this project will fund an additional bus driver to be available when bus drivers are out. We have had many situations where bus drivers test positive for COVID or are close contacts and we can not find substitute bus drivers. Having an additional driver means that this will be less of a problem and we will still be able to transport students to school for in-person learning.

5. Funds from this project will be used for traffic control. During the COVID-19 pandemic many more parents drive their students to school in order to help with social distancing and avoid quarantining. Funds will purchase safety vests, equipment, and software for managing dismissal.