

**Richland County CUSD #1**  
**ARP ESSER III Fund Plan**  
**2021-2024**

**Introduction**

Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III ARP Fund (ESSER III), states and school districts are provided with emergency relief funds to address the impact that Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. School districts must provide services to students and teachers in public schools as required under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. School districts are eligible for reimbursement of funds from March 20, 2020 through September 30, 2024. The Richland County School District is eligible to receive a little over \$6.2 million in ESSER III funds on a reimbursement basis. This amount is based on the same formula used for Title I grant funding, which is determined by the number of students considered low-income.

**Process**

In the spring of 2021, the district administration began meeting with building administrators, teachers and educational support staff to determine the needs of the district and how to best allocate ESSER funds to meet the needs of the students in RCCU #1. From these meetings, there were several different areas identified. Those areas included additional curriculum and instructional materials, instructional technology to support student learning, tools to assess student learning and diagnose learning loss attributable to missing school during the pandemic, additional personnel (especially in the areas of supporting students social and emotional well-being and academic support), facility upgrades to allow for better social distancing of students, and transportation and food service needs. Below is a summary of how the ESSER III funds will be allocated.

**Personnel**

It's people, not programs, that make a difference. Providing additional personnel to address student learning loss and improve student outcomes is the first area of focus. The district has added a Math Instructional Coach and a Reading Instructional Coach this school year to work with the teachers on implementing best instructional practices as well as providing training for teachers on the effective use of data from state and local assessments to better guide future instruction. In addition, a Math Interventionist was hired to provide small group and one-on-one interventions for students in grades K-8 who need some extra support to reach their academic goals.

The school district currently has an opening for a District Curriculum Director for the 2022-23 school year. While this position will include many responsibilities, this person's primary focus will be to work with building principals and teachers to review, analyze, and assist with the articulation and implementation of curriculum at all three buildings.

## **Curriculum**

The second area of focus in the ESSER III Fund Plan is providing curriculum resources to help address learning loss that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Classroom teachers are working to identify the gaps that currently exist in the curriculum. They will be able to collaborate with their grade-level or content-area team, the district curriculum director and the instructional coaches to effectively review and analyze what changes need to be made in order to improve student outcomes.

## **Pre-K Center**

The final area of focus that will be addressed using ESSER III funds is the construction of a Pre-K Center to house the Birth-3 and Pre-K programs. The current enrollment at RCES is approximately 1100 students, which includes approximately 180 pre-k children. Overcrowding has been a challenge at RCES for many years. A new Pre-K Center will allow RCES to reclaim areas of the building to provide better social distancing and a more effective use of the space for students in Kindergarten - 5th grade. BLDD Architects and Poettker Construction have been working on the design/development plan and the project is scheduled to go out to bid later this spring. Construction is scheduled to start this summer with an anticipated completion date in the summer of 2023.