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Norfolk Public Schools' (NPS) Plan for Spending American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Funds

Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' **academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs**. Norfolk Public Schools has been awarded \$113,301,572.62 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to the Division of Communications and Community Engagement at 757-628-3459 or TellUs@npsk12.com.

Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

ARP Act ESSER III funds may be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning. Norfolk Public Schools will use approximately \$65,917,374 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below:

- Upgrades to ventilation systems in 30 schools and buildings across the division to provide increased amounts of fresh air within the buildings;
- Continued purchasing of personal protective equipment;
- Supplies to clean and disinfect schools;
- Additional classroom materials and supplies to support instructional needs from PreK through grade 12, so students do not have to share frequently used items. This would include the purchase of school supplies for all students; and
- School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs including the replacement of select water fountains at all schools and centers with bottle filling stations.

Addressing Unfinished Learning

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. Norfolk Public Schools will use approximately \$29,720,000 (26.2%) of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below:

- To support extended school days to recover learning loss. Funds are to be used for before and after school and on weekends to recover learning loss.
- To support additional tutoring and small group instruction during the school day.
- To complete the creation of and maintain an online school, Virtual Scholars Academy (VSA), to support students who want to continue to learn virtually as well as students who want to have blended learning opportunities.
- The continuation of extended programs for summer learning and enrichment activities through the summer of 2024.
- To hire mathematics and reading tutors for additional assistance during middle school English and mathematics support blocks.
- Funds for an early literacy tutoring program in grades K-2 to support students identified as needing improvement through the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment.
- To purchase a vocational training program for an identified group of students with disabilities that has a focus on skills training and behavioral development.
- To purchase software licenses throughout the division for students with disabilities that include instructional resources, online learning platform-lessons, and progress monitoring tools for all content areas across grades K-12.
- To purchase research-based curricula (specially designed instructional programs and interventions) for reading, math, and social skills specifically as Tier 3 interventions to be used by special education teachers and staff in inclusion and division-wide self-contained programs.
- To purchase division-wide software and programs to support content, teaching, and student learning for use from remediation to enrichment.
- To support the creation and use of a division-wide data platform that will create accessible reports for teachers, school leaders, and division-level leaders for improved data-driven decision making and to enhance the identification of instructional needs.
- For assessments that address content outside of courses covered by current assessment platforms to support learning loss across all content areas.
- To purchase reading materials at a variety of levels for the creation of classroom-level libraries that will support literacy needs across all grades.
- To support hiring tutors specifically for students with disabilities to overcome learning loss by offering one-on-one and small group tutoring during the school day.
- For transportation to support tutoring on Saturdays for extended learning opportunities.
- For contract services to provide live online tutoring support for students after school hours.
- To purchase materials and manipulatives for mathematics instructional support.
- To purchase curriculum and materials to support learning loss for students identified as English learners.
- For software, academic support, and tutoring for students who need credit recovery to maintain their track towards on-time graduation.

Other Uses of Funds

Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act permits school divisions to use the ARP Act ESSER III funding not reserved to address unfinished learning to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a variety of ways. Norfolk Public Schools will use approximately \$20,936,845 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below:

- Software to assist with monitoring student safety while using a division device online.
- To provide in-home Internet access for students.
- Professional development focused on the use and implementation of instructional programs and software, general instructional practice, and social-emotional learning best practices and supports.
- Curriculum, programs, and supports to meet the social-emotional learning needs of students and staff.
- Funds to increase methods for community engagement and communications.
- Computer equipment and technology upgrades for classrooms, students, and teachers.
- Funds to review curriculum, instruction, and assessment alignment.
- The creation of parent/guardian academies to provide parents/guardians with the opportunity to learn about the technologies and instructional platforms their children are using so they can better assist in the learning process.
- Funds for additional materials for recess and physical education.
- Funds for school psychologists, social workers, and school counselors to work directly with student groups outside of regular operating hours.
- To support before and after-school clubs and activities.
- To provide additional field trips and experiential learning activities for students.
- Additional PreK seats for students who do not qualify for PreK through Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) funding.
- Program support for student who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Part-time hours for instructional coaching support for first- and second-year teachers as well as building administrators.

Addressing Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Through the use of the ARP ESSER III funds, NPS will ensure interventions implemented will respond to the needs of students across the division, particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academic Needs

Students will return to classrooms five days per week starting in the fall of 2021, with the exception of students in grades 4 through 12 who choose to continue learning virtually. Through the addition of the ARP ESSER III funds, every student and teacher will have any needed technology, programs, support, and supplies for engaged learning. Professional development began during the summer of 2021 and will continue throughout the length of this funding to support needed interventions.

As the year progresses, data will be monitored at every school each month with representation from division-level leadership and support teams through data support meetings. These traveling teams will include representatives from curriculum, school leadership, and special education at a

minimum. Principals and school level leaders will lead the work of these teams to review their data and to request any needed supports to implement resources and programs that address learning needs identified through the data. At each of these data meetings, interventions will be monitored to ensure they are responding to the academic and social-emotional needs of students. If needs are not being met, school improvement plans will be redesigned with additional supports to ensure goals are being met for all students. Particular focus will be paid to those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including: students whose families are economically disadvantaged; students of color; English learners; students with disabilities; students experiencing homelessness; students in foster care; and students whose families have migrated from other countries to the US.

Supports for each school will be differentiated based on specific needs noted through the data meetings. Additionally, part-time staff will be hired to assist with reading and mathematics at the elementary and middle school levels and will be in schools daily to assist with struggling students. At the high school level, tutoring funds will be increased to ensure there are adequate human resources to assist with learning loss. Through the use of the traditional assessments that have been used in NPS, as well as the addition of software designed to assist teachers in differentiating instructional needs, every student will have the assistance needed to make up for over a year of disruption to the learning process.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The COVID -19 pandemic is problematic for families, students, and educators. A primary challenge for Norfolk Public schools is balancing the safety needs of the community and families with the mental health and academic needs of our students. Norfolk Public Schools must be intentional in supporting both students and staff in developing social and emotional skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making.

Norfolk Public Schools is following the Virginia Tiered Systems of Support in implementing programs to support students. In this model, systems, data, and practices are examined to determine the specific needs of schools and the school district. Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Programs will be implemented to foster students' social and emotional development. Over the course of the 2020-2021 school year, each school developed a PBIS plan and will be ready to implement PBIS schoolwide programs. PBIS will be the framework for discipline throughout Norfolk Public Schools. This framework includes layers of support for academic, behavioral, social/emotional, and psychological needs. Using evidence-based practices, the PBIS framework layers support for all students based on data. The PBIS framework focuses on relationship building and the teaching of behavioral expectations. Schools PBIS plans and interventions will be monitored during regularly scheduled meetings to ensure student's needs are being met.

Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER III Plan, Norfolk Public Schools conducted consultation through meetings with internal stakeholders that included division-level leadership representing curriculum and instruction, school leadership, budget and finance, school facilities, Title I, homeless, English learners, and special education as well as school-level leadership, teachers, and specialists, to develop an initial plan for review. Following the initial plan, stakeholder meetings were held with principals, teachers, building level and division level specialists, as well

as content coordinators. Following these meetings, participants were asked to share the information with additional stakeholders and respond with additional ideas to be included in the application. To gain further insight into the needs of the community, a survey was sent to all parents and employees, as well as posted on several social media outlets for input. As of the close of the survey window, there were 2,856 responses with a representation of 1,701 (59.6%) parents/guardians, 13 (0.5%) students, 737 (25.8%) teachers, 67 (2.4%) school administrators, 264 (9.2%) school support staff, 47 (1.7%) central office staff; and 27 (1%) community members. This survey was also sent directly to professional organization representatives and school board advisory committees to ensure they had an opportunity to submit input. The 2,856 respondents represented the following groups (respondents may choose more than one option): English language learners 736 (25.9%); Homelessness 577 (20.3%); Foster Care 447 (15.7%); Migrant 271 (9.5%); Incarcerated 265 (9.3%); Special Education 1,167 (41%); Disability with or without a 504 988 (34.7%); None of the Above 1,231 (43.3%); and other [which included such items as gifted, low-income, adult education, and military to name a few] 127 (4.5%).

Not only did the survey provide valuable information as to how the community wanted to see the funds spent, there were 1,159 written responses providing specific ideas that were incorporated into the posted plan. Once the spending plan was developed, it was posted on the NPS website and additional opportunities for public comment were created through an additional survey. Once all input for revisions is received, it will be reviewed and considered for inclusion, and the final application will be prepared for submission by September 1, 2021.

Making the Plan Available to the Public

Norfolk Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at www.npsk12.com;
- The plan is available in multiple languages Spanish, French, and Filipino (via the translate option on the school division's website);
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact the Division of Communications and Community Engagement at 757-628-3459 or TellUs@npsk12.com to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting the Division of Communications and Community Engagement at 757-628-3459 or TellUs@npsk12.com.