

American Rescue Plan ESSER III Funds

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Department of Education released several grants to local educational (K-12) agencies. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grants provide school districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had on elementary and secondary schools.

The ESSER funds were allocated through:

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (ESSER I)

Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations (ESSER II)

American Rescue Plan (ESSER III)

Funds from each of the ESSER distributions were required to be spent following a set of allowable uses that meet the goals of “preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19”. The ESSER III distribution follows those same allowable uses but also includes additional restrictions.

- 20% of funds must be reserved to address the academic impact of lost instructional time
- Maintenance of equity
- Meaningful consultation with stakeholders
- Plan for Use of Funds

Milan Area Schools will receive \$1,280,537 in ESSER III Funds to be spent during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

In December of 2021, in accordance with ESSER III grant requirements, through a survey, Milan Area Schools sought feedback from all district and community stakeholders to help determine how the district could best utilize ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning and ongoing COVID-19 recovery. The survey allowed people to provide input within the allowable categories of use for ESSER III funds. The options listed below (allowed by the state for the use of ESSER III funds) were provided and 485 people completed the survey. Each respondent was allowed to select up to 5 items that they consider to be top priorities for the use of the funds.

Possible Area For Expenditure	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Continue to employ existing staff (to minimize class size and provide differentiated instruction)	339	69.9%
Mental health services and supports	309	63.7%
Address the academic impact of lost instructional time	258	53.2%
Educational technology (including hardware, software, connectivity, assistive technology, and adaptive equipment)	194	40.0%
Provide principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools	169	34.8%
School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk exposure to environmental health hazards	154	31.8%
Replace and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in	151	31.1%

school facilities		
Activities to address the unique needs of identified subgroups of disadvantaged students	144	29.7%
Summer learning and supplemental after-school programs	141	29.1%
Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities	101	20.8%
Planning for or implementing activities during long-term closures	100	20.6%
Training and professional development for staff	88	18.1%
Develop strategies to implement public health protocols in line with the CDC	53	10.9%

On January 27, 2022, the district hosted a Zoom Session to share the results of the survey and seek additional meaningful consultation from interested community members. The bulleted items below were generated during the meeting. Participants were asked to verify that the notes taken truly captured their specific comments. The parenthetical () numbers before some items represent the number of times the same suggestion was made by separate individuals.

- Summer programs for students with special needs and 504 plans (in-person)
- (8) Retain staff for youngest learners (lower class size)
- More interventionists at elementary buildings (Math)
- Monitor amount spent on PD as it was a low ranked category
- Support activities to get students re-engaged in post graduation activities (college, career training, military, work force)
- PD on Learning Strategies and Teaching Strategies
- SEL Needs of Students (all building levels)
 - (2) Therapy dogs at each building
- (2) PD for paraprofessionals
- Reading support for EL students (tutoring options)
- (8) Smaller class sizes for elementary specials
- Smaller secondary class sizes
- Return educational field trips to curriculum
- Increase elementary STEM time
- Increase elementary PE time
- HS mental health support (counselors and social workers)
- (2) Extra support time/schedule options for HS students (small group/intervention time)
- Staff mental health
- Consider 6 hours at MHS

Based on the community survey and the community input collected at the Zoom Session, the district applied for the ESSER III (American Rescue Funds) as detailed in the application provided below. It is important to note that the district will also be using general fund dollars and 11t funds to cover expenditures in areas that were highlighted by the survey and community input, but not included or fully covered in the ESSER III grant application. These areas include but are not limited to:

- After School Programs
- Summer Enrichment Programs
- Continue to Employ Existing Staff (to minimize class size and provide differentiated instruction)

- Additional Mental Health Services
 - Educational Technology
 - Staffing and Supplies that Address the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time
 - Provide Principals and Other School Leaders with the Resources Necessary to Address the Needs of Their Individual Schools
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American Rescue Plan 2021



1. Please describe the extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning:

Funds will be primarily used to cover the cost of additional classroom teachers to maintain reduced teacher-to-pupil class ratios across all grade levels. By maintaining reduced teacher-to-pupil ratios in classrooms, the district will align with the CDC's guidance of maintaining at least three feet of physical distance between students in classrooms to reduce transmission risk and create a more physically healthy learning environment. Where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of three feet, the district will support multiple layers of prevention, including but not limited to, providing masks for students as needed, maintaining enhanced filtration systems to improve air quality, screening and testing as required by local and state requirements, encouraging hand washing, and maintaining a high level of cleaning and disinfection standards.

2. Please describe how the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (see below) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year:

Funds specifically targeted towards the requirements as outlined in 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act will be used to cover the cost of additional teachers to maintain reduced per pupil class ratios across each K-5 grade level. The reduced pupil-to-teacher classroom ratios will target the improvement of tier I instructional strategies within an MTSS framework to minimize the impact of lost instructional time for all students. Specifically, these funds will create a greater ability for teachers to implement an evidenced-based instructional approach recalibrated towards the science of reading around the decoding ability of students in grades K-3. All K-5 grade-level teams will also work closely with the district's elementary instructional coaches to draw attention to other content identified as critical. Additionally, the reduced pupil-to-teacher class ratios will enhance the ability for teachers to create safer and more inclusive classrooms by providing differentiated and personalized instruction within their tier I instructional practices resulting in a reduced reliance on tier II and tier III remediation in the MTSS framework.

3. Please describe how the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act:

Funds specifically allocated within the requirements as outlined in 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act will be directed to maintain additional teachers in grades 6-12 and a high school counselor, as well as support the

implementation of the SEL-based Classroom 180; A Framework for Creating, Sustaining, and Assessing the Trauma-Informed Classroom. The additional teachers in grades 6-12 will help create smaller pupil-to-teacher class ratios in order to enhance the ability of teachers to implement tier I instructional strategies within an MTSS framework to minimize the impact of lost instructional time for all students, create safer and more inclusive classroom environments through differentiated and personalized instruction, and reduce the reliance on tier II and tier III remediation in the MTSS framework.

These funds will also support an increased attention to student social, emotional, and mental well-being by maintaining additional counselor support at the high school as well as implementing the Classroom 180 Framework, which is a program that meets the USED's standard as an evidence-based tier I strategy. The Classroom 180 Framework will guide teachers' ability to create and sustain classrooms designed to meet the needs of all students in their tier I instructional practices, especially those who have been impacted by trauma.

4. Please describe how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions implemented under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (see below) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and migratory students.

Benchmark assessment data will be reviewed in the fall, winter, and spring to ensure that academic progress is being made by students as well as to support differentiated and individualized instruction for each student. Nationally normed diagnostic assessment tools (NWEA MAP for grades K-8 and SAT suite of assessments for grades 9-11) will be utilized for guidance on the differentiation of instruction. Disaggregated data will be used by individual teachers, with support of grade-level teams, to identify students in particular subgroups in need of additional targeted support as well as to measure the impact of tier I instructional strategies.

The social, emotional, and mental health needs of students will remain a priority for our district and will continue to be a focus area for staff professional development. The SEL-focused professional development will be guided by the District's Trauma Team, consisting of social workers, counselors, the district psychologist, and the director of student services, to assist classroom teachers with meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students. Within this approach, the district will also support the development and/or implementation of a social-emotional screening tool to be used as part of the district's ongoing MTSS work. This screening tool will provide data to help staff address the needs of individual students as well as subgroups in need of intervention.