

On April 21, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) on ARP Act ESSER III funds. The IFR was effective immediately and has the authority of law. The IFR requires that each LEA that receives ARP ESSER III funds must submit a plan that describes how it will use ARP Act ESSER III funds.



Revised: 7/30/21

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs. Staunton City Schools (SCS) has been awarded **\$6,258,501.53** in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to *Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent, 540-332-3390*.

Prior to the ARP Act, SCS received approximately \$5.8 million from earlier rounds of COVID relief funding. These funds have been used for or allocated to a variety of measures to address COVID mitigation and prevention, to repair and improve school facilities to reduce risk of viral transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, to improve indoor air quality in school facilities, and to facilitate remote teaching and learning, and to continue to employ existing staff. Uses of these prior funds include, among others:

- Personal protective equipment, sanitation equipment and supplies
- Thermometers
- Repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems, including installation of bi-polar ionization units at each school.
- Air purification systems installed in every classroom
- HEPA filters installed on every school bus
- Construction of outdoor learning spaces
- Buses and vehicles to provide adequate social distancing during transportation

- Meal packaging systems and supplies for household food delivery
- Salaries and benefits to retain teachers jeopardized by cut in local funding
- Child care for teachers' children during the shutdown
- Full-time floater subs for provide teacher support and replacement
- Summer School expansion
- Hotspots and computing devices for 100% of students and families
- Data network upgrades
- Software licenses and subscriptions for remote learning
- Interactive robots for remote therapy for autistic students

Section 2: 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. SCS will use approximately \$2.8 million of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

SCS has budgeted \$2.75 million to increase the available classroom space at Shelburne Middle School. Funds will also be used to improve the HVAC system at Shelburne, specifically to replace a damaged boiler. SCS will replace traditional water fountains in the elementary, middle and pre-school with water bottle filling stations. Similar stations were installed in the high schools during its recent renovation.

Section 3: Addressing Learning Loss

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use at least twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (i.e., learning loss) through the implementation of evidenced-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after school programs, or extended school year programs. Staunton City Schools will use approximately \$1.4 million of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address learning loss as described below.

Among the evidence-based interventions included in SCS' ARP ESSER III budget are:

- Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP)
- School Improvement Leaders (SIL)

- Expanded Summer School program in June 2022
- Expansion of clubs and afterschool tutoring
- Licenses for Virtual Virginia and APEX on-line learning courses
- RVR (Sphero) and Cue Robot Sets
- RJE Restorative Justice Cohort]
- Sensory Pathways at the preschool and elementary schools
- Replacement of library books unreturned during FY21 school year
- Teacher Grant Applications for Innovative Learning Processes
- Creation of a calming room at Shelburne Middle School

Section 4: 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. Staunton City Schools will use approximately \$2.1 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

Other uses of ARP ESSER III funds by SCS focus on making our schools and classrooms better for educating students and communicating with our learning community. Approximately \$1.1 million will be used to install Promethean boards in every classroom, develop a new, improved SCS website, and replace the defunct intercom at Bessie Weller Elementary School. SCS has also allocated approximately \$1.0 million to retain full-time, floater substitute teachers in each school.

Section 5: Addressing Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The division is planning to focus funds in three different areas, which will help respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students.

- 1) **Academic Interventions:** Funds will be allocated for academic supports, based on current achievement data for students. The division has joined a consortium of schools, Comprehensive Instructional Program, that help to look at aligning data to academic needs and providing support for ALL students in need. School improvement leaders, hired for each elementary and middle school, will help teachers in looking at data for students, and working with other staff to help provide intervention. In addition, we will also broaden our library texts (representative of a diverse population of students) to facilitate broad reading for students. Finally, we will provide extended after-school tutoring and summer school for students needing this intervention.

- 2) **Social and Emotional Learning and Supports:** Based on a full return to in person , 5 day a week instruction, we anticipate helping students navigate multiple events that could have occurred when they were not in school, and navigating any emotions about a return to in-person learning. Funds may support student mindfulness and well being through the creation of calming space and sensory pathways to support emotional regulation in our school buildings. Funding may also support staff training and resources regarding restorative practices. As we reconnect with students, funding may also provide for staffing at the alternative to suspension center for our middle and high school students. . Funding may include additional supports such as sensory items, books, activities, games and professional development to increase counselor effectiveness in helping students learn to regulate their emotions.
- 3) **Performance Tasks:** Because of the disruption to learning that occurred through the recent pandemic, it is important to re-engage our students. One of the greatest ways to do that is through tasks that provide meaningful/ relevant experiences, enriching experiences, and deep thinking for all of our students. Funds would be used to purchase resources that could provide hands-on problem-based experiences. In addition, teachers would be able to apply for funds demonstrating innovation learning practices and direct applications from the grades/ subjects taught.

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the APR ESSER Plan, Staunton City Schools conducted consultations with various stakeholders including administrative staff, principals, and teachers. The Staunton Education Association provided insight and recommendations through a survey it conducted among its membership, which was shared with the SCS administration.

Staunton City Schools also provided two forums for members of the public to provide input on the ARP ESSER Plan. Public input was solicited on the SCS website homepage from June 5, 2021 to July 14, 2021. A simple, open text box was available for individuals to provide recommendations and suggestions for use of the funds. The Staunton City School Board also advertised and held a hearing for public input at its July 12, 2021 School Board Meeting.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

Staunton City Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at *www.staunton.k12.va.us*.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact *Cara Moore, ESL Coordinator, 540-332-3920*, to request a translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting *Dr. Jelisa Wolfe, Director of Student Services, 540-332-3934*.