

**Bethlehem Elementary
School District ESSER II
and III Funds
Recommended
Allocations**



May 27, 2022

Background

Governor Chris Sununu declared a state of emergency on March 13, 2020 and ordered all K-12 schools to be closed for in person learning as of March 15, 2020. That closure required us to immediately pivot and provide education in ways unimaginable just a few days earlier.

The Bethlehem School District responded quickly and within a week had devices or packets of work in students' hands, schedules for food delivery established, and developed systems for delivering education remotely. As schools worked to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year, challenges and additional costs associated emerged. In response, the federal government allocated funds through the ESSER I - CARES/SPSRF, ESSER II -CRRSA, and ESSER III-ARP. The two largest allocations, ESSERII (CRRSA) and ESSERIII the American Rescue Plan. These funds are to be used to address needs specifically resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and meet specific requirements. These allocations will provide the Bethlehem School District with resources needed as it responds to challenges resulting from the pandemic over the next three years.

This document is intended as an overview of the Bethlehem School District's proposed expenditures of ESSER II and ESSER III funds.

Definitions

- **CARES Act (ESSER I):** Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; federal relief measure signed into law March 20, 2020. Funds must be allocated by September 30, 2022.
- **CRRSA Act (ESSER II):** Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; federal relief measure signed into law on December 27, 2020. Funds must be allocated by September 30, 2023.
- **ARP (ESSER III):** American Rescue Plan; federal relief measure signed into law March 11, 2021. Funds must be allocated by September 30, 2024.
- **ESSER:** Elementary and Secondary Schools Educational Relief, which could refer to any one of the three funds allocated to by the CARES Act (ESSER I), CRRSA Act (ESSER II) and ARP (ESSER III or ARP ESSER)

- **SPSRF 1:** Supplemental Public School Response Funds; Designated to provide relief and support for unanticipated costs associated with the safe opening and operation of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **SPRF 2:** Application for COVID-19 expenses in excess of \$200 per pupil that had not been reimbursed by other available sources.
- **LEA:** Local Education Agency; specific to New Hampshire, this is the school district
- **SEA:** State Education Agency, specific to New Hampshire this is the state Department of Education

ESSER Allocations

- **CARES Act (ESSER I):** \$ 47,385.00
- **SPSRF 1:** \$ 28,400.00
- **SPSRF 2:** \$ 87,972.00
- **CRRSA Act (ESSER II):** \$204,996.49
- **ARP (ESSER III):** \$460,843.72

What can these funds be used for?

Approved uses of funds vary between ESSER II and ESSER III (see Appendix 1 ESSER comparison). In general, though, ESSER funds can be used for:

- Educational technology purchases including internet connectivity, hardware, devices, software, etc.
- Supplies and services to enable remote learning
- Mental health services and supports
- Diagnostic assessment tools to gauge students' knowledge and skills as well as potential gaps in learning
- Professional development opportunities for district staff to increase capacity around high quality instruction, assessment, and learning environments
- Supplies and services to sanitize district facilities and provide access to personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Planning and coordinating systems for addressing long-term closures including how to provide meals, technology for online learning, carrying out legal requirements, and providing educational services

- Procedures to coordinate systems to improve district preparedness and response to COVID-19
- After/before school enrichment programming beyond what is currently provided
- Access to tutoring and programming outside of school days and hours
- Addressing loss of opportunities to learn
- School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards and support student health needs
- Inspecting, testing, maintaining, repairing, replacing, and upgrading projects to improve indoor air quality in school facilities including HVAC systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement

What CAN'T these funds be used for?

- Building new school facilities
- Substantially reducing local support for public K-12 education
- Expenses that are not specific to preventing, preparing, or responding to the impact of COVID-19

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past 18+ months, we have navigated the unique challenges of providing education during a pandemic. We continue to respond in a flexible manner that is aligned to our strategic plan. We have learned much from this experience and as a result education will never look quite the same as it did in March of 2020. While the availability of vaccines provided hope, we continued to experience a summer surge of cases which told us this pandemic is not yet over. We know that the academic and social emotional impacts of this pandemic will continue into the future. Therefore, this plan has been developed to leverage the available resources to address identified needs now and respond to those that are discovered in the future. The design incorporated input from a diverse group of stakeholders as each priority and action step is aligned with the goals of our strategic plan. This plan should, and will, change as we respond to the new conditions and needs of our students.

PRIORITIES

1. Increase student growth and achievement by providing high quality learning experiences through which students develop mindsets, character, communication, and thinking skills necessary for them to achieve regardless of the pathway chosen while addressing losses in opportunities to learn
2. Recruit, recognize and retain high quality personnel dedicated to meeting the needs of each and every student
3. Provide access to reliable technology to minimize interruptions to learning and expand learning opportunities available to students
4. Engage with our community to partner in supporting our students and remove barriers
5. Provide and maintain safe and healthy facilities for all students and staff

Proposed ESSER II and ESSER III Allocations

Below is a graph to show the percentage of funds anticipated to support each of our five priorities. This document overviews plans at the current time. It is important to note that the plan will continue to be revised as conditions and the needs of our students change.

Percentage of ESSER II and ESSER III Funds Allocated by Priority

Area: ESSER II - \$ 204,996.49

ESSER III - \$460,843.72

Community Engagement 8%

Facilities 7%

Student Growth & Achievement 57%

Personnel Support 17%

Technology 9%

Indirect Costs 2%

STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

Being able to document both growth and achievement over time is critical to the success of our students. We know that the pandemic has increased gaps in learning and has negatively impacted many students' opportunities to learn. Therefore, funds are allocated in this plan to keep class sizes at a reasonable level to support personalized learning experiences, expand access to learning experiences outside of the traditional school day and year, and increase academic offerings for students. This will also allow us to return safely to face-to-face instruction by minimizing potential exposures through cohorting as needed.

We propose utilizing these funds over a three-year period. Under that proposal, the largest portion would be used during the 2022-2023 school year, with reduced amounts in subsequent years

- 2021-2022 School Year - \$ 90,000
- 2022-2023 School Year - \$233,299
- 2023-2024 School Year - \$ 50,000
- Through September, 2024 - \$ 50,000

SNAPSHOT OF STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT BUDGET

Total Amount Allocated to this Priority: \$423,299

Art Teacher 4.72%

Two Additional Teaching Staff 60.43%

Extended Learning Opportunities 8.86%

Summer School 11.81%

Tutoring 14.17%

Art Teacher - The art teacher position was increased from part-time to full time. Many students connect with academics through arts making this change important for students returning after COVID.

Elementary Educators - Keeping class sizes at or below 20 students is one strategy for reducing potential exposure to COVID-19 and at the same time allows for more

Extended Learning Opportunities for Students - The intent is to reach as many students as possible in various ways that meet their learning style. personalization of instruction.

Tutoring - We are aware that the pandemic has led to a loss of opportunities for many students to learn which resulted in gaps in achievement. We also know that as COVID-19 continues to be a threat to our public health, students will likely be exposed to COVID-19 and may need to be temporarily excluded from school. Access to tutoring will allow for individualized support to address gaps in learning resulting from disruptions caused by COVID-19 and provide continuity of education.

Summer/Vacation Week Enrichment Programming - We know that students continue to learn outside of school days and hours. These funds are designed to provide students in kindergarten through grade 6 with access to enrichment/learning activities during vacation periods and the summer months. This will also create opportunities for students to explore Career and Technical Education pathways.

PERSONNEL SUPPORT

The Bethlehem School District is committed to recruiting, retaining, and recognizing the highest quality personnel possible. Research suggests that access to high quality teachers is the most important factor in ensuring student success. Budget items include funds to support: Professional Development, Staff Wellness, and Paraprofessional salary increases.

We propose utilizing these funds over a three-year period.

- 2021-2022 School Year - \$ 39,000
- 2022-2023 School Year - \$22,500
- 2023-2024 School Year - \$15,000
- Through September, 2024 - \$ 0

SNAPSHOT OF PERSONNEL BUDGET

Total Amount Allocated to this Goal: \$76,500

Professional Development 22.88%

Staff Wellness 26.14%

Para Raises 50.98%

Paraprofessional Raises - Salary increases for the para professionals who play a huge role in meeting the academic and social emotional needs of our students who need the most. It is a huge value to pay the salaries well enough so that they are committed to staying at the school.

NCES (North Country Educational Services) Membership - This service provides a platform for staff to engage with colleagues from across the region to increase access to resources and learning opportunities for students.

Professional Development - These funds will provide access to experts in instruction, assessment, social emotional development and competency-based learning from whom our staff can learn when engaging in job-embedded, on-gong professional development.

Staff Wellness - Staff wellness is critical for meeting the diverse and growing needs of our students. The New Hampshire Department of Education identified this as one of the priorities for these funds. In this budget funds are provided to allow staff to engage in a variety of wellness activities aligned with their interests and needs.

TECHNOLOGY

The importance of having access to reliable, current technology was magnified as we work to provide uninterrupted access to education regardless of the setting. COVID-19 required us to be able to pivot without warning from face-to-face to remote delivery of instruction. As a result, we have allocated funds to continue to upgrade both our devices and infrastructure. We have also allocated funds to support the implementation of a learning management system that has the flexibility to allow students to access learning remotely and communicate effectively regarding their progress towards competency. Ensuring reliable, dynamic technology access for all students continues to be critical as we work to meet the demands of providing education during a pandemic.

We propose utilizing these funds over a three-year period. Under that proposal, the largest portion would be used during the 2021-2022 school year, with reduced amounts in subsequent years

- 2021-2022 School Year -\$71,385
- 2022-2023 School Year -\$ 0
- 2023-2024 School Year -\$ 0
- Through September 2024 - \$ 0

SNAPSHOT OF TECHNOLOGY BUDGET

Total Amount Allocated to this Goal: \$ 71,385

Promethean Boards-Twelve promethean boards to provide all classroom teachers with updated technology to improve instruction and engagement. Promethean boards' interactivity allows students to participate and attend to all lessons. These boards save instructional time by putting all necessary instructional materials at a teachers' disposal.

Chromebooks-During remote learning it was determined that all students needed access to laptops that would allow easy access to Google Classroom. The Ipads we were using for our youngest students were not able to meet the demands of remote learning.

A five year service plan as the Promethean Boards: this plan will become an integral part of instruction. This will allow us to eliminate lost time if they malfunction.

Touch screen Laptops: At the time of remote learning it became evident that we needed touch screen enabled PCs to allow for successful art lessons during any remote times.

COMMUNITY FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

We recognize and value the importance of being part of our community and the playground has something for everyone. Babies, toddlers, students, parents, grandparents and friends all come together for all kinds of reasons at the playground.

We propose utilizing these funds over a three-year period.

- 2021-2022 School Year - \$0.00
- 2022-2023 School Year - \$0.00
- 2023-2024 School Year - \$50,000
- Through September, 2024 - \$0.00

SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT BUDGET

Total Amount Allocated to this Goal: \$50,000

Family Engagement - The current playground and plans for future outdoor spaces

were born by groups of parents watching their kids play. Parent engagement meetings are hoped to start up again now that we are able to re-open our doors for more gatherings like this.

FACILITIES

In providing instruction during the 2020-2021 school year, the Bethlehem Elementary School District worked closely with local health care providers to incorporate recommendations from the NH Department of Public Health (NHDPH), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to ensure students were able to access face to face learning with minimal interruptions. Changes to facilities included a new HVAC system (paid for with SPSRF 1 & 2 funds), Radiator Controls, and roof repairs. All of which made the school a healthier and efficient building. Using CARES money, we purchased needed PPE, and marked the building to create visual cues to support physical distancing, and the installation of plexiglass in high traffic areas. As we continued to navigate providing education during the pandemic, we became aware of necessary facility upgrades such as window repairs that will improve air flow and circulation. We also recognize the need for increased cleaning and sanitation supplies as well as access to personal protective equipment (PPE). This creates an increased burden on the local budget to provide these products and ensure high quality cleaning. takes place.

We propose utilizing these funds over a three-year period.

- 2021-2022 School Year - \$ 0
- 2022-2023 School Year - \$ 20,000
- 2023-2024 School Year - \$ 0

SNAPSHOT OF FACILITY BUDGET

Total Amount Allocated to this Goal: \$ 20,000

Paint Trim and Repair Wood over 90 Windows - This will keep the windows in good working order and further seal the building

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Links to emergency funding for schools documents from NH DOE site

[NH DOE Emergency Funding For Schools](#)

U.S. Department of Education American Rescue Plan Fact Sheet

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf