**BELL COUNTY SCHOOLS**

**ARP ESSER LEA PLAN**

The Bell County School District was awarded and has accepted American Relief Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds (ARP ESSER) from the federal government. These funds are intended to prepare for, respond to and overcome obstacles presented by the global COVID 19 pandemic.

**Consultation:** A committee of district administrators, teachers (including union members), technology staff, parents (including parents of students with disabilities to represent one of our historically disadvantaged population groups), students, Bell Whitley Community Action Agency (representing the historically disadvantaged population group of low socio-economic status) was formed to determine the needs of students in order to address learning loss. [After conducting research and speaking with area leaders, we could find no civil rights groups or organizations in our county. Therefore, there was no inclusion of these group in our consultation.] Using those results, ARP ESSER planning meetings were conducted on separate dates allowing for stakeholder input. A brief description of allowable uses of the ARP ESSER funds was presented to the committee by the district finance officer with an open forum for input that followed. Each idea was recorded, discussed, and addressed. Suggestions that fell outside the scope of the ARP ESSER spending guidelines which arose in the course of the forum were also discussed as possible options for the use of other revenue sources. Our future consultation plans include monthly update meetings which will be conducted in conjunction with other federal program meetings to regularly analyze the use of ARP ESSER funds and to implement budget adjustments if necessary. The district principals along with the district team will meet each month to review the ARP ESSER goals and in turn report to the Superintendent who will update the Bell County Board of Education on the progress of the ARP ESSER plan.

**Prevention and Mitigation Strategies:** In order to prepare for future outbreaks, sanitation equipment and supplies will be purchased with ARP ESSER funds. These include but are not limited to disinfectant fogging machines at each school, scrubbers and buffers, hand sanitizer, masks and an increased emphasis on cleaning surfaces as well as the air quality at each individual schools. Upgrades to HVAC equipment at all schools will assist in making the air cleaner and safer. Furniture will be purchased as needed to replace group tables to allow for social distancing by utilizing individual student desks that can be arranged to maximize instructional spaces. In addition to physical items purchased, the staff has been trained on the necessary precautions required to prevent the spread of disease and are being required to do daily inspections and cleanings that were not in place prior to the pandemic.

**Academic impact of lost instructional time:** Although the Bell County School District has made every effort to continue quality instruction during school closure, learning loss has occurred. ARP ESSER funds will be spent to continue the on-line learning option (using the Odysseyware platform) for those students who still cannot or are not comfortable in returning to in-person instruction. Summer Learning Academies which were put in place during the summer of 2021 to address learning loss will be sustained and enhanced for future years through the use of ARP ESSER funds. Summer learning programs target any student who is in need of catch-up services and/or remediation services as well as provide engaging enrichment activities. Transportation will be provided for summer as well as food services. Summer instructional programs funded through ARP ESSER funds will provide greatly reduced teacher to student ratios which promote expanded one on one and small group instruction for our students.

Because the vast majority of our students live in homes with a low socio-economic status, the committee conducted research on proven strategies and interventions to meet the needs of low-socioeconomic students. As we currently have multiple programs in place, we determined that staff would be our best investment through 2024. In order to develop an intensive and customized plan to address learning loss, the district will create two positions at each K-8 school to meet student needs in reading and math. These Reading and Math Interventionists will focus on small group and one-to-one interventions with targeted students, incorporating research-based strategies and programs. Existing programs will be utilized, including but not limited to SFA Tutoring, Reading Mastery, MAP Accelerator, Symphony Math, Lexia, and MobyMax. At the 9-12 level, teachers will be provided continued professional learning and year-long coaching on Silver and Strong’s The Thoughtful Classroom. Materials for support will also be purchased from Silver and Strong. This will allow for teachers to be trained in using teaching strategies to address all learning styles and needs as well as students’ social and emotional health.

**Academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of all students:** The Bell County Public School district realizes that students need academic support as well as social, emotional, and mental health support to address various issues caused by the pandemic and prolonged school closures. By implementing our plan to have individualized instruction at all grade levels, we anticipate that social, emotional, and mental health needs will be reduced. Having systems in place to close the gap for students who require intense remediation and developing relationships and connections with students as related to their academic needs positively impacts the school experience for students. ARP ESSER funds will be used to provide both certified and classified staff with supplemental service pay for extra time and effort they will spend during the coming school year addressing academic, social, emotional, and metal health issues that arise with the students they service.

ARP ESSER funds will be used to continue salaries for all district counselors and instructional supervisors in order to provide support for all students and teachers. Counselors will implement the use of a social and emotional curriculum through Satchel Pulse to address social and emotional health issues related to the pandemic. Instructional supervisors will provide support to teachers in addressing learning loss and remediation.

**Other use of funds:** Bell County Public Schools received a substantial allotment of ESSER funds in all three phases of the relief effort. Due to the abundance of funding, all monies cannot be spent on sanitation and/or catch-up services. It is the philosophy of our stakeholders that all remaining funds should be utilized to upgrade and repair our facilities for future years in order to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for all students. The district will upgrade HVAC systems at Page School Center, Yellow Creek School Center, and Lone Jack School Center. The surplus of funds will also enable the continued employment of specialty services in the areas of guidance counselors and instructional supervisors.

Instructional technology will also be upgraded. Interactive panels will be purchased for all classrooms. Interactive panels enhance communication between teachers and students and encourage collaboration amongst classmates. Student devices will also be refreshed and upgraded to assist with remote learning.

It is the goal of the Bell County Schools to best utilize every dollar for the enrichment and continued education of our students both present and future. Numerous planning meetings have been conducted to allow for all stakeholders to have input regarding the best use of ARP ESSER funding. All students in the Bell County School district are considered high poverty and funding will be equally divided for the benefit of all students. This plan may be revised with community consultation at any time during the course of the ARP ESSER financial funding period.

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