

Kuspuk School District (29) - FY 2022 - COVID Relief - Rev 0 - ARP Act: ESSER III

Section A: District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

* A.1. Describe how the district developed the plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. Provide how the district sought public comment on the plan and took such comments into account in the development of the plan. Include which stakeholders were involved in the development of the plan.

Academic Continuity

· Kuspuk School District provides support and connection to students to their classes and peers with in-person learning and, when needed, periodic distance learning, including distance participation with virtual classes for individuals in quarantine. To address each student's academic needs, Kuspuk School District will administer benchmark assessments, classroom and/or program-based assessments. The diagnostic assessments are designed to inform instruction, recovery and intervention and account for learning loss, as well as determine the present performance levels of students on math and literacy standards. KSD will administer the STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and Star Math and iReady Reading and iReady Math assessment as the initial diagnostic. The results of these assessments will assist in measuring the performance and growth of students from one school year to the next and are used by teachers and school staff to inform instruction and personalize learning – identifying areas of strength as well as areas that need additional support. Site administrators and teaching staff will meet to identify where students are academically and work to establish and implement classroom-level plans for addressing learning gaps. KSD will provide additional instructional supports to students:

- o At risk of not graduating on time
- o Students with disabilities
- o Students who struggled prior to COVID
- o Other students identified as being behind academically by teachers and parents

· Kuspuk School District will continue site implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI)

Social, Emotional, Mental Health

Provide students and staff opportunities to express their feelings verbally and non-verbally as is appropriate for age. A licensed clinic social worker is a resource available to all students and staff. The social worker offers strategies and opportunities to validate the feelings and concerns of all students and staff as they are expressed or outline a specified time to provide resources

* A.2. Provide the link to district's plan.

<https://www.kuspuk.org/cms/lib/AK01001921/Centricity/Domain/4/KSD%20District%20Mitigation%20Plan%206-18-21%20copy.pdf>

Section B: Stakeholder Consultation

* B.1. Describe how, in the planning for the use of ESSER III funds, the district provided opportunities for input and engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders including, but not limited to: students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; Tribes; and other stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory children, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

Kuspuk School District provided opportunities for input and engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in multiple ways.

1. Monthly public school board meetings. Each month, August-May, the Director of Federal Programs and Special Education, Dr. Madeline Aguillard, presented updates regarding the COVID Relief funds and district uses. During this time, the floor was also opened for questions and comments. Any questions and comments were recorded, gathered, and used for future planning purposes.
2. Grant Planning Workshop - May 6, 2021. During this workshop the public was invited to learn about current and upcoming grant opportunities. Feedback was solicited for future planning purposes. Advertisements for this meeting were made through board meetings, postings at the post office and local stores, and online social media posts.
3. District Faculty and Staff surveys. Surveys were administered twice during the 2020-2021 school year to all district staff to solicit feedback about the school environments and to solicit feedback for future planning purposes.

Through these different avenues input and engagement opportunities were offered to a variety of stakeholders including, but not limited to: students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; Tribes; and other stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory children, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

Section C: Identifying Needs

* C.1. Describe the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 on student learning and student well-being, including identifying the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic.

School closures have a impact on all students, but especially on the most vulnerable ones who are more likely to face additional barriers. Children and youth from low-income and single-parent families; immigrant, refugee, ethnic minority and Indigenous backgrounds; with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations; and those with special education needs suffer by being deprived of physical learning opportunities, social and emotional support available in schools and extra services such as school

meals. They risk falling further behind and becoming isolated with school doors closed. These students are likely to lose the most in terms of educational outcomes and the support provided by schools (OECD, The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion: Supporting vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings, 2020).

Kuspuk School District recognizes school closures related to the current COVID-19 pandemic means many students, especially those from diverse backgrounds who are more at risk of increased vulnerability are less likely to receive the support and extra services they need, and the gap between students that experience additional barriers and that do not might widen. Multiple factors throughout the pandemic have impacted student learning and well-being, including:

1. Lack of being in the classroom, during school closures resulted in a loss of direct instruction, small group work, and individualized learning opportunities.
2. The creation of online learning platforms to support teachers, students and their families highlighted the fact that not all students have the same access to information and communication technologies.
3. COVID-19 restricted movement (with the social distancing and cohort requirements to limit exposure) and there was less school engagement and less inter-personal relationship development during these times.
4. Lack of space due to social distancing requirements. Walls had to be demolished in classrooms to extend the learning spaces and students were unable to navigate through most of the buildings because of lack of space and the number of people exceeded the space required to socially distance.
5. Closures can also have considerable effects on students' sense of belonging to schools and their feelings of self-worth. This is especially key for inclusion in education (students with disabilities, students receiving gifted and talented services, and twice exceptional students). The lack of social contact can be particularly impactful for vulnerable students: those with broken families, abusive families, in foster care, suffering from food insecurity or lacking housing.
6. COVID-19 crisis may trigger symptoms of anxiety or other forms of mental disorders in children and adolescents. People with depression and bipolar disorder are particularly vulnerable to disruptions in routines and their usual patterns of daily life.
7. Facilities in need of repairs & improvements to reduce risk of virus transmission according to CDC guidelines.
8. Unprecedented teacher turn over.

Section D: Coordination of Funds

* D.1. Describe how the district will coordinate with other federal education funding (i.e., other COVID Relief funding, ESEA, IDEA, CTE, child nutrition).

The director of Federal Programs and Special Education, Dr. Madeline Aguiard, will ensure coordination with other federal education funding through her cross involvement ESEA and SPED and by hiring and directing a Federal Programs Assistant to cross monitor all federally funded activities. This individual will:

- Assist the Director of Federal Programs in maintaining documentation for all programs and organizes and disseminates information to the appropriate people.
- Compile and organizes Federal Programs monitoring documentation.
- Assist in completing grant reports, preparing program forms and compiling evaluation data as may be required by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

- Work with staff throughout the district on grant program activities.
- Maintain Federal Programs inventory.
- Facilitate purchase order processing between Federal Programs and the Business Office.
- Complete quarterly reimbursement requests.

Section E: Use of Funds

* E.1. Describe how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning.

- According to the most recent CDC guidance, students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority. Therefore, Kuspuk School District intends to open all nine schools and operate 100% in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year, as applicable.
- According to the CDC, vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, Kuspuk School District will continue to promote vaccination to help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports. Some funds may be needed to perform maintenance on the district owned plane. During COVID-19, commercial flights were cut from the flight schedule within the district. Now, the district is lucky if there is one commercial flight per week to some of the villages. Additionally, some villages have closed to commercial flights. During these closures the district relied on our plane in order to move supplies, food, equipment. Without the district plane, many of our schools would be unable to operate and stay open.
- CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms. Kuspuk School District intends on having all students and staff in person with 3-foot social distancing during the 2021-2022 school year, as practicable. In addition, transitions between spaces will be limited. Schools will adhere to the following strategies to maintain social distancing as much as possible: • Provide socially distanced learning spaces. • Develop and implement outdoor learning spaces/classrooms.
- Kuspuk School District will also encourage screening testing, ventilation, hand washing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection as important layers of prevention to keep schools safe, according to CDC guidance.
- All schools in Kuspuk School district will follow the guidelines developed by the CDC for cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation of school campuses. For the 2021-2022 school year, the District will: • Have cleaning stations associated with all restrooms. After using the restroom, students and staff must wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. • Ensure soap and water or hand sanitizer are easily accessible near all entry doors, all high traffic areas, in every classroom or other learning space, and anywhere where food or drink is consumed. • Instruct younger students on how to cover their mouth and recommended behavior when coughing/sneezing. • Mount hand washing visuals with instructions and pictures in applicable areas. • Teach all students how to correctly wash their hands and use sanitizer. • Ensure temperature check stations are available if needed in the future.

- Kuspuk School District will have the following in place: • Instructors will sanitize work areas between classes, including keyboards and screens. • Custodial staff and maintenance will clean all facilities at the end of the school day, with spot cleaning during the day on an as needed basis. • Check and or fill all hand sanitizer stations daily. • Maintain and clean all cleaning supplies; rags (microfiber), vacuum cleaners & filters, wet mops, and dry mops. • Hand washing and gloves to be used during cleaning

In order to prepare schools for reopening the district will need to purchase additional cleaning supplies, materials to promote hand washing, recommended behavior when coughing/sneezing, hand sanitizer, gloves, rags, vacuum cleaners, filters, wet mops, dry mops, etc. Additionally, possible facility repairs & improvements to reduce risk of virus transmission have been identified as a concern and are required to meet CDC guidelines in some instances. Potential facility repairs will be evaluated based on CDC guidelines and if found not to meet the guidelines they will be made. These repairs could include: Air ventilation systems, windows, doors, partitions.

* E.2. Describe how the district will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA's total allocation of ESSER III funds) 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 programs.

Kuspuk School District will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA's total allocation of ESSER III funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as:

-Summer Learning and Summer Enrichment

KSD Summer Camp 2021 & 2022. In an effort to expand summer programs and to address potential learning loss as a result of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, KSD will begin offering summer school during the summer of 2021. Summer camp will have rigorous academic opportunities alongside with cultural and STEM programming. Students who were in preschool through 3rd grade during the 2020-2021 school year will have the opportunity to attend programming at participating schools. Students who were in 4th through 12th grade during the 2020-2021 school year will have the opportunity to attend programming at Caunaq (Kalskag's Culture Camp). KSD will provide transportation to and from the home villages and camp.

Khanaposhtani et al., (2018) argued youth are introduced to STEM topics through informal settings like science camps, aquaria, and zoos. In these interactive and sensory-rich environments, a well-designed program can help participants to acquire knowledge and cultivate interest through experiential learning. Through a qualitative analysis and open coding, Khanaposhtani et al., identified three core principles of informal outdoor curricular design that positively contribute to participants' learning experiences, including direct experience with nature, the use of authentic technology, and exercises that promote collaborative teamwork. Furthermore, they argue activities that promote scientific practices and engagement with authentic tools in a real-world context creates a learning environment in which participants collaboratively construct deep conceptual understanding of different aspects of environmental STEM topics and foster interest in the context of science inquiry.(Ghadiri Khanaposhtani, M., Liu, C. J., Gottesman, B. L., Shepardson, D., & Pijanowski, B. (2018). Evidence that an informal environmental summer camp can contribute to the construction of the conceptual understanding and situational interest of STEM in middle-school youth. *International Journal of Science Education, Part B*, 8(3), 227–249. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>)

-Outdoor Learning Centers.

As an extension of the 2021 and 2022 Summer camps and as part of the districts prevention and mitigation strategies, KSD intends to begin offering more robust outdoor learning experiences for students. This opportunity is two-fold; first, students will have access to high quality air circulation and flow while outside and students will have access to place-based learning. The CDC states, "Ventilation is one component of [maintaining healthy environments](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html), and is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy for schools and childcare programs." (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>) Aguilar & Krasny (2011) posited environmental programs, due to their free-choice nature and multiple opportunities for participation, uniquely allow for the development of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire (Aguilar, O. M., & Krasny, M. E. (2011). Using the communities of practice framework to examine an after-school environmental education program for Hispanic youth. *Environmental Education Research*, 17(2), 217–233. Retrieved from <https://www.knowledgemobilization.net/>). Additionally, Ardoin et al., (2018) identified 121 unique outcomes of outdoor education opportunities and found most articles reported positive findings from the programs under study. These reflections stemming from the review highlight the versatility of environmental education, while also suggesting opportunities for bolder and more diversified approaches in research design and thinking (Ardoin, N. M., Bowers, A. W., Roth, N. W., & Nicole Holthuis, N. (2018). Environmental education and K-12 student outcomes: A review and analysis of research. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(1), 1–17. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/>).

KSD will have 2 operational Outdoor Learning Centers, Caunaq and Crooked Creek. These Outdoor Learning Centers will promote place-based and experimental learning opportunities for students across the district. As a part of the Outdoor Learning Center, KSD will offer wilderness-based experiences that will provide healthy lifestyles, team building and education opportunities different from the traditional classroom. There will be four wilderness-based experiences per year. The summer expedition would be a Kuskokwim river raft float trip. The fall expedition is the Salmon River raft float trip. The winter and spring sessions would be subsistence moose hunts. Kenai Backcountry Adventures and Erich Henry Kuball Enterprises will provide the partnership opportunities to ensure successful trip planning and implementation.

* E.3. Describe how the district will use funds to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students.

In times of crisis, ensuring access to extra services to vulnerable students is crucial to foster equity, inclusion and their well-being. It can make a substantial difference in the lives of students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds and help prevent widening educational gaps. Therefore, a holistic approach to education – that addresses students' learning, social and emotional needs – is crucial, especially in times of crisis. KSD recognizes the well-being of students and support for those from a socio-economic disadvantaged background is an important part of the re-opening strategy. Furthermore, in accordance with the Office of Civil Rights, *Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students*, KSD is dedicated to building our schools back better and stronger—with the resolve necessary to ensure that our schools are defined not by disparities but by equity and opportunity for all students. The interventions and activities described below advance equity for underserved students by providing opportunities, otherwise not available to the students of Kuspuk School District.

With nine schools in six villages and completely off of the road system, Kuspuks School District spans 12,000 square miles across remote, western Alaska. According to 2010 census data, approximately 1,350 individuals reside in the census area. The area's villages are situated along a 120 mile span of the mid-Kuskokwim River from Lower Kalskag to Stony River, and only accessible by air or river travel. More than 96% of district students are Alaska Native of Yup'ik and Athabascan descent. Kuspuks School District is identified as a Rural Low Income School (RLIS) system. In addition, as of the 2020-2021 school year, all KSD schools are labeled as Title I, and according to family income surveys, 96% of KSD's student population are economically disadvantaged. However, based on 2020 state and federal free or reduced lunch requirements, 100% of students are considered economically disadvantaged.

Currently, only 57% of students graduate from high school in KSD, and across the district many students struggle with academic achievement. Results from district assessments, STAR Renaissance Early Literacy and Reading, indicate 87% of K-12th grade KSD students are below or far below Alaska grade level standards in reading and 70% of K-12th grade KSD students are below or far below proficient in math. Furthermore, according to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Report Card to the Public, 90% of KSD's 3rd-9th grade students scored below proficient or far below proficient on the PEAKS English Language Arts assessment and 89% scored below proficient or far below proficient on the PEAKS Math assessment.

Although academic and economic needs are clear, the often "hidden" need has more to do with students being at-risk due to high levels of trauma (Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma Engaged Practices in Alaska, 2019). This community and its youth have not only suffered from historical trauma such as language and culture suppression and family separation, but have also consistently experienced traumatic events including: homicide, suicide, relationship violence, and alcohol-related deaths.

Therefore, in coordination with the activities described in E.2, the following activities will be funded to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs:

-Tele-Health Services

Tele-health services will be made available to all students throughout the district with a focus on promoting mental health awareness and prevention programming through an innovative, hybrid approach to screening, assessment, treatment interventions and services for students across the district. The district will have tele-health stations set up in each school to provide individuals access to counselors, social workers, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. The tele-health providers will work towards providing culturally responsive treatment options through the use of restorative practices. This program activity also aligns with Alaska's Positive Trajectories, "Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources" and "Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes."

-Reading Teacher: Crooked Creek - JJSS

In an effort to support existing ESEA reading programs to ensure all students read at grade level by the end of third grade, expand tutoring and Response To Intervention (RTI) programs KSD will hire a Reading teacher to be based in Crooked Creek at JJSS. This program activity also aligns with Alaska's Positive Trajectory, "Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade."

-Fine Arts Teacher: Aniak - AJSHS

In an effort to close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources KSD will hire a Fine Arts teacher for Aniak at AJSHS. This program activity also aligns with Alaska's Positive Trajectory, "Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable

educational rigor and resources." Furthermore, offering an in-person elective credit will increase student engagement and potentially assist with increasing the district's graduation rate.

-Career Exploration Center - Aniak

To build out and address facility or equipment needs to reestablish CTE coursework as students return to robust CTE hands-on instruction KSD will build and establish the Career Exploration Station. In line with Alaska's Positive Trajectory, "Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs," The Career Exploration Station will provide students with a better understanding of the real world through career explorations of various fields. A building will be purchased and outfitted with the needed materials and supplies to fully operate the Career Exploration Center. These encounters will increase self-esteem and self-confidence and demonstrate to students how different careers fit into the world around them. Through innovative teaching practices and pathways, students will participate in hands-on, real world experiences. KSD will offer several career and technical sessions during the year. These CTE courses will provide the introductory skills needed to move into more advanced courses or training once the students graduate high school.

-Flight School will offer ways for students to explore key aviation foundation concepts, complete a discovery flight, an instrument instruction course, and tour local businesses in the aviation industry.

-Welding course that provides introductory training in welding, including oxygen-acetylene cutting, oxy-fuel processes, and welding joint designs. Students will study NCCER Level 1 Welding modules.

-Carpentry training and will offer basic house and building construction. Students will learn basic tool safety and usage to become proficient in job site skills for an introductory level carpentry position.

-Law Enforcement will be able to take a course that will explore the roles of law enforcement through hands-on activities and career orientations by different law enforcement agencies throughout rural Alaska.

Students will learn the basics of the criminal justice system and the requirements for this specific career path.

-Emergency Services course available is an Emergency Trauma Technician. Students will learn the basics of emergency medical care. This course will be more suited for rural Alaskan medical emergencies. Students will receive a certificate to be an Emergency Trauma Technician after 40 hours of training.

-CTE Instructor & Community Partnership Liaison - Career Exploration Center - Aniak

In order to provide the opportunities at the Career Exploration Center and to expand work-based learning options for students to reengage in real world CTE learning, KSD will hire a CTE instructor for Aniak at AJSHS. Additionally, in an effort to promote employer community-outreach, KSD will hire a classified community partnership liaison to assist with program implementation, community based partnerships and events, business tours. This program activity also aligns with Alaska's Positive Trajectories, "Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes" and "Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs."

* E.4. If applicable, describe how the district will use funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs.

Not applicable

Section F: Evaluation

* F.1. Describe how the district will evaluate the level of implementation and effectiveness of programs funded.

KuspuK School District will evaluate the level of implementation and effectiveness of the program activities in the following ways:

-Summer Learning and Summer Enrichment

Student participation rates based on attendance logs. Children's Hope Scale pre- and post- assessment administered at the beginning and end of Summer Camp.

-Outdoor Learning Centers

Student participation rates based on attendance logs. School Culture and Climate survey data collected at the beginning and end of the school year.

-Tele-Health Services

Student participation rates based on provider invoices. Student SEL survey results, (Stachel Pulse SEL Survey - Use real-time data to foster positive environments and ensure that students develop and grow their social-emotional skills)

-Reading Teacher: Crooked Creek - JJSS

Standardized test scores. The district will monitor changes or growth based off of STAR Early Literacy, Star Reading, and iReady Reading diagnostic assessment scores. These assessments are administered at multiple points throughout the school year.

-Fine Arts Teacher: Aniak - AJSHS

Student participation based on class enrollment. School Culture and Climate survey data collected at the beginning and end of the school year.

-Career Exploration Center - Aniak

Student participation rates based on attendance logs. School Culture and Climate survey data collected at the beginning and end of the school year.

-CTE Instructor & community partnership liaison - Career Exploration Center - Aniak

Student participation based on class enrollment. School Culture and Climate survey data collected at the beginning and end of the school year.

Section G: General Education Provision Act (GEPA)

* G.1. Describe how the district will comply with the requirements of Section 427 of GEPA, 20 U.S.C 1228a. The description must include information on the steps the district proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers

(including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.

All program activities for COVID Relief ARP Act: ESSER III, will comply with Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that outlines the six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation in program activities including gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. These KSD activities target students, parents, and school district employees of different genders, races, national origins, colors, disabilities, and ages to the fullest extent possible. All potential beneficiaries will have the ability to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Moreover, it is the district's vision for COVID Relief ARP Act: ESSER III funding that every child access comprehensive, interconnected systems of academic, behavior, and social-emotional support to enhance individual outcomes to strengthen our community. No participant will be denied participation in program activities based upon their gender, race, national origin, color, age, or any disability. The Director of Federal Programs and Special Education will monitor program activities to ensure equitable participation is not limited due to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Furthermore, Kuspuk School District has a committee to oversee special appeals for staff, families, and individuals who feel they have been discriminated against because of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age.