

NORTON CITY SCHOOLS APR ESSER III PLAN-August 9, 2021

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation’s students by addressing students’ **academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs**. NORTON CITY SCHOOLS has been awarded **\$1,890,141.75** in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used.

Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Gina Wohlford, Superintendent or Virginia Roberts, Director of Federal Programs, Norton City School Board Office 276-679-2330.

Norton City Schools has been open with in-person learning since August 5, 2020. The division began with students attending 4 days a week in-person with a virtual day on Fridays. Also, the division offered a remote learning option for students, as requested by parents. Mitigation strategies of handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing have remained in place since August 2020 and will continue to be practiced throughout the next school year in accordance with CDC and VDOE guidelines and for K-12 Public Schools.

It is the belief of Norton City Schools that students benefit from in-person learning and safely returning to in-person instruction 5 days a week in the fall of 2021 is a priority.

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](#) and [Virginia Department of Education guidelines](#) on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning. Norton City Schools will use approximately **\$1,449,959.19** of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

NORTON CITY SCHOOL OPERATIONS- HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES
Mitigation Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCS will promote vaccination as a public health strategy for ending COVID-19 by offering Vaccination Clinics through the Virginia Department of Health at school sites throughout the year, specifically, before the start of school in the fall. Promoting vaccination can help our schools safely return to in-person learning, as well as participating in extracurricular activities and sports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal masking of all students, employees, and visitors in accordance with SB 1303 and CDC guidelines. Consistent and correct mask use by people is important, especially indoors, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norton City Schools will adhere to three feet of social distancing in classrooms to the greatest extent possible. • Universal masks for all students and school personnel while indoors will be in accordance with CDC guidelines and SB 1303 and masks will be mandatory on school buses in accordance with federal regulations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick, and getting tested will be encouraged. Information about symptoms of COVID-19 and daily self screening information will be made available to parents on the Division website, social media outlets, School Messenger, and electronic school signage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and disinfecting school buildings and buses will occur daily, or more often as needed. • Sanitizing stations and other necessary supplies will be available in each classroom and throughout the school buildings for use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, teachers and staff will be made aware that they should stay home when they have signs of infectious illness and to visit their healthcare provider for testing and care. • NCS will monitor community transmission and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the extent of layered prevention strategies necessary at any given time. • Virginia Department of Health COVID- 19 Metrics will be monitored weekly to help make informed decisions: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/pandemic-metrics/school-metrics/ • Community Transmission is measured by a scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial, and High. • Norton City Schools may apply the School Metrics to the Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Findicators.html • <u>If Norton City Schools is in Low or Moderate</u> = Masks are strongly recommended for all students, teachers, staff and visitors (PK-12), while indoors. • <u>If Norton City Schools and/or the locality is in Substantial or High</u> = Universal masking will be necessary while indoors and for students, teachers, staff, and visitors. • <u>Additionally, the following mitigation strategies will be implemented:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional Screening measures ○ Greater distancing in all settings, including meals ○ Limited classroom changes ○ Additional VDH or CDC recommendations may be implemented as well. ○ Norton City Schools will continue to monitor health metrics and recommendations from the CDC, VDH, and VDOE. • Norton City Schools will work with VDH to determine any operational status change due to increased COVID-19 cases for individual classes, schools, or the school division. • Updates for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities will be provided when necessary. • Schools will have masks available.

Norton City Schools has seen an impact on transportation needs within our division and will purchase an additional bus to help with social distancing concerns on buses, allowing for timely and appropriate cleaning between routes, and providing appropriate transportation needs for returning students from the virtual setting.

Norton City Schools will replace a section of roofing at NEMS to improve ventilation in the cafeteria area, to help with better air quality and to correct a leaking issue.

Electronic signs will be installed at both schools within the Division to prevent viral spread and will give the schools the ability to communicate with parents in real time, remotely from their vehicles. This will enhance communication with the community and families. These signs are touchless, which helps decrease community spread of COVID-19.

Norton City Schools will modernize the current bathrooms at both schools to improve ventilation, improve air quality, respond to a need for greater hot water access, touch-free facilities, prepare for greater sanitization, increase social distancing and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In order to respond to the need for greater air quality and ventilation, NCS will be replacing windows at John I. Burton.

Summary

- **Additional Bus**
- **Roofing (NEMS)**
- **Electronic /digital signs**
- **Bathrooms**
- **Window replacements**

Section 3: Addressing Unfinished Learning

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after school programs, or extended school year programs. Norton City Schools will use approximately **\$416,182.56** of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

Norton City Schools will address the academic impact of learning loss and target students with learning gaps in the primary grades by providing an additional teacher and paraprofessionals for greater individualized instruction as well as providing a year-long comprehensive after school program for all grade levels. Math and reading critical skills will be the key focus for addressing learning gaps. Additionally, an extensive summer school program with enrichment/Project-Based Learning opportunities will be held the summer of 2022 for all grade levels and high school courses.

English Language learners will receive additional support by providing stipends to certified EL instructors at both schools in our division.

Summary

- **Learning loss teacher 2022/23**
- **Learning loss paraprofessionals 2022/23**
- **2022 Summer School 30 teachers**
- **2022 After School Program teachers**
- **Benefits 22/23 learning loss teachers and staff**
- **English Language Student Support**

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. Norton City Schools will use approximately **\$24,000** of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

Norton City Schools will focus on technology needs of our students by having agreements for technology support in general education and for virtual instruction as students meet eligibility requirements for Norton City Schools.

Kajeets hotspot devices will be made available to respond to the need of internet service for students as necessary.

Summary

- **Technology Support:**
 - **Consultation 2022-2023**
 - **Virtual Learning Support 2022-2023**
 - **Kajeets (12) with unlimited service**

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

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health-

Norton City Schools will be partnering with **United Way to embark on a Trauma Informed Initiative** for our entire division. All employees will receive mental health awareness training as employees return in the fall 2021. Teachers and staff will be better prepared to respond to the warning signs and social/emotional needs of our students during this learning process. School Counselors and Administration will support this partnership and work with students on an individual basis as needed.

Norton City Schools will prepare for supporting social/emotional/mental health needs of our students by partnering with **Community in Schools with an on-site coordinator** for this program.

Norton City Schools will continue to provide breakfast and lunch for all students. All schools in the division are CEP schools, which means all students receive breakfast and lunch at no cost. Norton City Schools will focus on meeting the additional needs of students and families that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care. These sub groups will be a focus when identifying students and families that may need additional services and responding to their needs through community organizations and other support systems.

- United Way- Trauma Informed Initiative
- Community in Schools

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Norton City Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

- Planning Committee Meetings
- Leadership Meetings
- Board Meetings
- Parent/Community Surveys
- Advisory Committee Meetings

Committee meetings were held with the following stakeholders, including: students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, and school staff.

Committee meetings and surveys were conducted during the summer of 2020-2021, and the committees additionally have met throughout the school year, specifically during the spring of 2021 to revisit and revise elements of the ARP ESSER plan.

There is a division email account, info@nortoncityschools.org that is accessible to community members, stakeholders, civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations), and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and all other families for input on division plans.

This is monitored by the Superintendent and the designee for information that needs to be considered by the committees and shared at Board meetings.

Monthly School Board meetings are held and public comment is an agenda item at each Board meeting.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted at <http://nortoncityschools.org>;
- The plan will be accessible to the public on BoardDocs for the July and August Scheduled Board Meetings;
- The plan is available in multiple languages: 108 languages;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Becke Elkins, Norton City School Board Office 276-679-2330 to request translation;
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Becke Elkins, Norton City School Board Office 276-679-2330.