

# Webster Public Schools

## **ESSER III Implementation Plan**

### *Webster Public Schools Plan for Use of ESSER III Funds*

#### **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**. Webster Public Schools has been awarded \$4,630,098 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Ruthann Goguen, Superintendent of Schools, 77 Poland St. Webster, MA 01570, 508-943-0104.

Webster Public Schools' response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been and continues to be based upon the most up-to-date guidance from state and local health officials as well as the CDC. At the heart of our response has been our students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The goal of the 2021-2022 school year is to return as much as we can to a "normal" year with masks on. Extracurricular activities, sports, and field trips have returned.

On July 27, 2021 the Webster Public School Committee approved the Covid-19 Protocols for the 2021-2022 School Year. They also approved the necessary amendments to Face Covering Policy EBCFA. Both the Covid-19 Protocols and the Face Coverings Policy EBCFA are attached for reference.

#### **Section 2: Prevention and Mitigation Strategies**

ARP ESSER 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. Webster Public Schools will use approximately \$1,400,00 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

- Improve HVAC Systems at Webster Middle School
- Contracting Maintenance for upkeep and repairs
- Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (to improve outdoor space use and flexible seating options)
- Modularity to increase space at PAE to accommodate the extra support personnel funded by this grant

## **Section 2: 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. Webster Public Schools will use approximately \$2,323,948 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

- Provide traditional remedial summer school opportunities during the summers of 2022-2024
- Provide additional summer academic recovery and enrichment opportunities
- Provide additional Academic Support personnel for students with special needs during the 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years
- Provide extensive professional development to teachers in the areas of Tier 1 Instruction, Assessment and Grading, Differentiation, and Student Engagement with training, coaching and mentoring to impact teacher quality and enhanced student learning
- Provide online access to high-quality content, instructional tools, professional learning, engaging media and comprehensive diagnostic and progress-monitoring assessments
- Create positions to provide academic support to students while in quarantine
- Create building substitute positions for each building
- Supplies for At-Home Learning
- Literacy Coaches for each building to assist in the implementation of accelerated learning (with focus on grade level standards in Tier I instruction)
- Technology to increase engagement with students and provide more access to innovative learning opportunities

## **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. Webster Public Schools will use approximately \$504,485 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below. Uses include:

- Staffing and support for meals
- RN
- RN asst
- Subs for Custodians
- Technology support personnel
- Printing and Translation
- Busing

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

Webster Public Schools has renewed a partnership with You Inc., a leading behavioral health and education agency serving at-risk children, adolescents and families across Worcester County. Webster Public Schools will utilize grant funds provided by ESSER II Set-Aside funds to provide a Re-engagement Specialist at Bartlett High School, to focus on

dropout prevention, and also to fund the Bilingual Family Liaison during summer months to support students and families with academic needs. The Webster Public Schools will also increase counseling staff at Park Avenue Elementary School and at Webster Middle School and an additional School Psychologist. Funds will be used for PBIS supplies and consultation, to increase focus on school climate, and family engagement supplies. Funds in this section total approximately \$366,700.

### **Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment**

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Webster Public Schools conducted consultation in the following ways:

- With stakeholders, including: students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions – Webster Public Schools involved school and district administrators, teachers, students and families in the initial development of the ARP ESSER Plan through the use of numerous scheduled meetings and a district survey to families, students, and community members. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students were invited to attend the District’s SEPAC meeting, and were provided with surveys in Spanish and Portuguese. Input was obtained by the District’s Director of Student Supports, who is also the District’s liaison for Federal Programs and homeless/homebound/foster care, as well as by the Director of English Language Education.
- Public Comment opportunity took place during the September meeting of the Webster Public Schools School Committee.
- The District received 195 responses in English, 3 responses in Spanish, and 0 in Portuguese to the WPS ESSER III Survey 21-22. Respondents included students, parents, extended family, school administrators, teachers, support staff, local business owners, members of local civic or faith-based organizations, and local citizens. Stakeholders rated the following priorities the highest:
  - Providing mental health (very important = 129 responses)
  - Addressing needs of special populations and diverse learning needs (very important = 125 responses)
  - Providing educator support (very important = 114 responses)
  - Addressing learning loss (very important - 110 responses)
  - Extra support for student remediation (very important = 107 responses)
  - Addressing facility needs (very important = 105 responses)

### **Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public**

Webster Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at [www.webster-schools.org](http://www.webster-schools.org)
- The plan is available in multiple languages through the use of our web provider powered by Blackboard.
- 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 Ms. Kathleen Baris, Director of Student Support Services, at 508-943-0104, x. 40022.

## COVID-19 Protocols SY 2021-2022

The Webster Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment for students and staff during the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. *The protocols outlined below are subject to change based on guidance and data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Public Health (DPH) and, the Local Board of Health (LBOH), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).*

### COVID-19 Exposure Plan

The following outlines the plan that will be followed by the school nurses in coordination with building and district administration for possible or known exposure to COVID-19.

#### Isolation:

A confirmed or presumed positive COVID-19 case

- 10 days of isolation from onset of symptoms, can return on day 11 (as long as symptoms have improved).

#### Quarantine:

A close contact is defined as an individual who was within 6 feet of a positive individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes within a 24 hour period

- For in school exposure
  - Those under 3 feet of the positive individual will have to quarantine
  - Those who are within 3-6 feet of the positive individual will be notified of possible exposure, but will not have to quarantine
- For community exposure - those within 6 feet of the positive individual will have to quarantine
- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated will not have to quarantine as long as they are asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, they should stay home from school and be tested.

#### Testing during quarantine:

- No test - 10 days of quarantine are required. Can return on day 11 if asymptomatic.
- Negative test on day 5, 6 or 7 - can return on day 8 if asymptomatic. \*\*
- Positive test at any point during quarantine - see above Isolation timeline.
- \*\*Documentation of the negative test with name, date test was done, and test result is required to be turned into the School Nurse in order to return to school earlier than day 11 of quarantine.

#### Under Investigation:

- Those who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not report to school if symptoms are present prior to the school day, and should contact their School Nurse to discuss next steps.
- If symptoms develop during the school day, the individual should report to the School Nurse for assessment.
- Both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals who are symptomatic will require testing for COVID-19 at the direction of the School Nurse.
- If students/staff are dismissed from school with illness, the classroom will be sprayed with disinfectant known to be effective against COVID-19 as a precaution by the custodians as requested by the School Nurse.

#### Education during quarantine/isolation/investigation:

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and/or student to communicate with the WPS teachers to get make-up work during the quarantine period, as remote learning is not approved as time on learning by DESE for the 2021-2022 school year.

## **COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies**

### Masks:

According to public health experts, wearing a face covering/mask that covers the nose and the mouth and secures under the chin is the best mitigation strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In alignment with recommendations from public health experts, all staff and students in the Webster Public Schools will have to wear face coverings while indoors regardless of vaccination status (see Face Covering Policy for full details & exceptions).

### Outdoor Activities:

Masks are not required when outdoors. No masks need to be worn during outdoor activities due to the low transmission rate of COVID-19 in outdoor settings. Mask breaks should be outdoors whenever possible.

### Breakfast/Lunch:

WPS will attempt to have 3 feet distance between students when masks are off while students are eating. Students will be facing forward and all seats will face the same direction.

### Classroom:

No social distancing requirements will be in place between student desks. Teachers will assign seats and maintain seating charts to assist with contact tracing.

### Transportation:

Masks are required to be worn by all students when riding the bus. Windows will be down 2" to improve ventilation, so parents/guardians/students should dress accordingly during times of inclement weather.

### Additional Cleaning:

School nurses will coordinate with custodial staff for additional cleaning as needed when individuals are under investigation, quarantine or isolation.

## FACE COVERINGS

The Webster Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth and secured under the chin must be worn by ALL INDIVIDUALS in school buildings, and on school transportation. Exceptions to this include mask breaks for students or when adults are working alone in their office or classroom or with other vaccinated adults.

Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material and are not considered PPE. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID19 virus. Therefore, using masks that have an exhalation valve or vent are not allowed. The CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going and the effectiveness is unknown at this time, therefore these mask types will not be allowed as a sole means of protection.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing and has a pre-existing medical condition with a doctor's note;
- is unconscious;
- in incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required:

- during mask breaks
- while eating or drinking
- during physical education
- while outside

Due to the low rate of outdoor transmission of COVID19, students and staff do not have to wear masks when outdoors even if social distance cannot be maintained. This applies to recess, outdoor physical education classes and outdoor learning environments.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student will be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

Adopted by Webster School Committee August 25, 2020

Amended by the Webster School Committee September 22, 2020

Amended by the Webster School Committee May 25, 2021

Amended by the Webster School Committee, July 27, 2021

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