

Kuspuk School District (29) Public School District - FY 2024 - COVID Relief - Rev 0 - ARP Act: ESSER III

Section A: Stakeholder Consultation

* A.1. Describe how, in the planning for the use of remaining ESSER III funds in FY2024, 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. Provide dates for consultation activities.

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. Dr. Madeline Aguillard is not the Superintendent and still the Federal programs Director. The same stakeholder input processes have been in place during the transition.
2. Grant Planning Workshop - April, 19, 2023. 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 2021-2022 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 B: Identifying Continued Needs

* B1. Describe the extent of the continued 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 imp act 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 mean 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 interpersonal 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 C: Coordination of Funds

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

The Superintendent, Dr. Madeline Aguillard, will ensure coordination with other federal education funding through her cross involvement, as the Director of Federal Programs, 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 D: Use of Funds

* D.1. Describe how the funds will be used to continue 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.

Kuspuk School District intends to open all nine schools and operate 100% in-person learning during the 2023-2024 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.

Kuspuk School District will 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 2023-2024 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.

* D.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:

-Reading Teacher - \$37,000 Salary & \$15,716.25 Benefits

KSD will hire a reading teacher to facilitate small group, personalized literacy lessons. Kuspuk School District has been closely following the most recent research in the Science of Reading. This research has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach, and therefore improve student outcomes through prevention and intervention for reading difficulties (The Reading League [TRL], 2022). In recent years, we have learned more about how the brain acquires the skill of reading—we now know that we need to provide explicit instruction to help students build pathways in the brain between the part of the brain involved in processing print, speech sounds language, and meaning.

-Outdoor Learning Centers. - \$25,000

As an extension of the 2021-2023 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, 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.

-Dual Credit and credit recovery for high school students across the district. - \$3,000

Kuspuk Fall Wellness Retreat Professional Development - Supplies - \$10,000 Supplies & \$110,000 Travel During a multi-purpose event, Kuspuk will conduct a Fall Wellness Retreat and provide Professional Development for certified staff in Anchorage on November 3-6. The theme for this event will be Teaching and Leading with Resilience. Throughout the retreat and professional development, KSD educators will partake in collegiality building, team building, self-care, and professional training designed to promote post-pandemic progress. Through a dual focus of teacher retention and professional development, KSD educators will focus on best practices for addressing learning loss, mental health, and school safety.

* D.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, Kuspuk 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. Kuspuk 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-promise 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."

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

N/A

Section E: Evaluation

* E.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:

-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

-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.

-Dual Credit & Credit Recovery

Grade and completion data.

-Fall Wellness Retreat

Post event survey data

-Resiliency Stipend

School & district culture and climate surveys

- Social Worker
- Student surveys

Section F: General Education Provision Act (GEPA)

* F.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 Superintendent 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.