



El Paso County School District No. 8  
**ESSER III - Use of Funds Plan**  
*Reviewed October 2023*

**What is ARP ESSER III funding?**

ARP ESSER III funding is the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) multi-year grant from the federal government designed to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and to maintain safe school operations during the recovery phase of the pandemic.

**How did the District develop the ESSER III Use of Funds Plan?**


The District utilized an online survey and held a series of stakeholder meetings to collect feedback from staff, students, parents, and other Fountain-Fort Carson community members. Based on stakeholder feedback, a report on ESSER III was provided to the Board of Education (BOE) regarding the input process and recommended uses of ESSER III funding.

The Use of Funds plan was developed subsequent to BOE feedback and will focus on four main areas:

1. Academic Learning Loss (required to be at least 20% of ESSER III expenditures)
2. Mental Health Supports
3. Health & Safety Needs
4. Continuity of Operations

**How will the District ensure ESSER III interventions will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

In alignment with the District's Improvement Plan priorities of instruction, intervention and culture, Fountain-Fort Carson School District Eight will work to ensure that the interventions implemented to address the impact of lost instructional time will respond to the varying needs of students through careful consideration of research and evidence for the specific intervention; the frequency, duration, and intensity of the intervention; and monitoring of individual student data in response to the specific intervention. Individual student data, both academic and social/emotional, will be monitored at the school level through grade/department level conversation, "kid talks", intervention specific pre and post assessment, and for more significant interventions through the problem-solving process associated with each school's multi-tiered system of support.



For elementary students in FFC8 lost instructional time was significantly mitigated due to schools providing in-person learning throughout the entirety of the 2020 – 2021 school year. At the secondary level students attended school five days a week for the first semester using a hybrid learning model, during the second semester students attended a fully in-person model. Again, the application of these learning opportunities significantly reduced the overall impact of lost instructional time for secondary students.

Based on an examination of both district level interim data and state CMAS data there were mixed disproportionate impact on historically disadvantaged subgroups. Three areas of note from the examination of data were that students in grades K – 3, appeared to have a stronger impact on their development of early literacy and numeracy skills. Second, students receiving free or reduced lunch support did show lower performance on state CMAS measures as compared to their non-FRL peers, and African-American students did show lower performance on state CMAS measures as compared to their white peers.

FFC8 will ensure that it is supporting the implementation of instructional interventions by adding staff to assist students with achieving academic progress.

As appropriate FFC8 will use the following methodology in selecting and leveraging evidence-based interventions across the district.

1. Research the intervention through the “What Works Clearinghouse” to establish the strength of the research. Due to the limited number of interventions/programs that have been fully evaluated through this resource FFC8 will also consult information sources published by the Colorado Department of Education on approved programs that can be used for intervention purposes.
2. If this initial step does not yield the necessary information regarding the evidenced based status of the resource FFC8 will work both with the publisher of the intervention, as well as, when necessary conduct independent examination into the research basis of the intervention to establish its evidence- based standing.
3. If these two prior steps do not prove to provide the necessary research-based evidence for the intervention then FFC8 will at a minimum demonstrate a rationale based on a positive evaluation that the intended intervention is likely to improve student outcomes and the district will monitor the intervention through ongoing data gathering and analysis to ensure it is meeting its desired effect.

These three layers of examination and research will when possible include the intervention’s impacts on students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, *Native American Indian students*, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

## What will the District use ESSER III funds for?

Under this multi-year grant, the District has until September 30, 2024 to spend ESSER III funds. As priorities change in responding to the pandemic and its effect on staff and students, the Use of Funds Plan may be revised.

*This revision dated October 2023, replaces the Use of Funds Plan revised in September 2022.*

***Updated information is presented in italics.***

As of October 2023, ESSER III funds continue to be used to address the four main focus areas as follows:

### 1. Academic Learning Loss

- Add staff, including:
  - ✓ Reading and Early Literacy Interventionists
  - ✓ Online Program Teachers
  - ✓ Classroom Teachers
  - ✓ Paraeducators
  - ✓ Instructional Coaches
  - ✓ Special Service Providers
  - ✓ Long-term Substitute Teachers at each elementary school
- Extend and enhance summer school offerings, including additional staff to assist Native American Indian students and children with disabilities
- Purchase summer school curriculum materials
- Provide summer school scholarships for students
- Provide student transportation to/from summer school
- Add targeted after-school tutoring support
- Purchase instruction and assessment materials
- Provide field trips, experiential learning opportunities and heritage activities for Native Indian American students
- Enhance K-12 curriculum with additional supplies and speakers to include more diversity and understanding of Native American tribes and traditions

### 2. Mental Health Supports

- Add staff, including:
  - ✓ Behavior Support Specialists
  - ✓ Counselors and Psychologists for summer school
  - ✓ Counselor at Fountain-Fort Carson High School
  - ✓ Director of Mental Health

- Add after-school counseling support programs
- Add staff appreciation and wellness activities at each building
- Provide monetary incentives to help retain staff

### 3. Health and Safety Needs

- Add staff, including:
  - ✓ School Nurses
  - ✓ Roving Custodians
  - ✓ Lunch Monitors at elementary schools
  - ✓ Social Worker for the AIM Education Center
- Provide snacks for secondary students
- Purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and students
- Purchase sanitizing and cleaning supplies

### 4. Continuity of Operations

- Add staff, including:
  - ✓ Classroom Teachers (elementary)
  - ✓ Substitute Teachers assigned to schools
  - ✓ Communications Specialist
- Add hiring bonuses for hard to fill positions, such as bus drivers
- Purchase technology supplies for students
- Purchase other supplies as needed to maintain operations

## Questions and/or Comments?

Please contact  
Joanne Vergunst, Assistant Superintendent  
10665 Jimmy Camp Road, Fountain, CO 80817  
719-382-1300  
[jvergunst@ffc8.org](mailto:jvergunst@ffc8.org)