



Big Spring ISD Use of Funds Plan for the  
American Recovery Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund  
(ARP ESSER III) & Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act  
(CRRSA ESSER II)

Big Spring ISD was awarded \$9,623,089 based on our Title I formula through the American Recovery Plan. This allocation is divided into two specific allotments; the first two-thirds of the total was awarded first and the remaining one-third, \$3,209,768, has now been incorporated into the whole. The district planned for the entire amount by conducting meetings on May 3, 2021, May 27, 2021, and June 7, 2021. The public/stakeholders were asked to respond to a survey posted to the website (<https://forms.gle/SuZqmdv12MinMdev8>) on May 18, 2021, and due on May 31, so that the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting could include any data/comments that may have been offered through the survey. All of the meetings and the survey were conducted to determine the best use of funds to meet the guidance and allowable expenditures of these monies under the special conditions created by COVID-19. This grant requires six-month reviews with input allowed from public meetings. The first of these reviews/public meetings was held Jan. 13, 2022; no changes were made to the original plan. The second review/public meeting occurred Aug. 11, 2022. Again, no changes were made to the original plan. The subsequent semi-annual public meeting was held Jan. 18, 2023. The audience was updated on the progress of the projects thus far and their interest resulted in good questions about possible completion barriers and grant extensions.

**Technology/Continuity of Instruction Needs**

Big Spring ISD, like all other school districts across the country, had to figure out how to offer continued instruction and services to all Big Spring Steers and how to enable teachers to provide quality, consistency, and support to the diverse learners in the district while campuses remained closed. Clearly, one-to-one technology devices became priority number one. ESSER III will allow the district to hire additional IT staffers to tend to the sheer numbers of devices now in the hands of every student. Moreover,

teachers need both hardware and software to enhance virtual and face-to-face instruction going forward.

### **Educational Needs**

The singular specific requirement for use of ESSER III funds is a 20% reservation dedicated to identifying and addressing the academic learning as well as the social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students due to closed schools in the spring of 2020 and, possibly, beyond. The district will be purchasing software and other resources to enhance existing or new programs that specifically target these areas. Virtual resources must be in place should campuses experience any sort of future closures.

Academic needs will also be addressed through teacher professional development and targeted tutoring for students. When tutoring must occur outside of regular school hours, or if supplemental staffing becomes necessary, ESSER III funds will be used to pay for these services and necessary supplies. Balanced literacy training/coaching is a huge initiative for BSISD elementary grades. This job-embedded professional development complements Reading Academy training and, together with the literacy emphasis, will encourage teacher retention and growth. Simultaneous expert training for school leaders within the Effective Schools Framework should complete a multi-levered platform for improvement across all campuses.

Big Spring ISD will target the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students by hiring full-time professionals through Communities in Schools at both secondary campuses. This highly vetted and knowledgeable organization will offer resources to address conditions specific to this area, which is currently experiencing worrisome economic uncertainty due to downturns in the petroleum industry. BSISD, then, will also provide school supplies for students with ESSER III funds to offset family expenses and further encourage in-person attendance.

Retention and recruitment remain issues for BSISD, but those who remained in the district throughout the shut down and the 2020-2021 academic years received a stipend to encourage continued service in Steer Nation. An additional retention stipend was authorized and distributed in August of 2022; however, this year the stipends were divided between ESSER II for those custodial/HVAC personnel paid directly from that fund and ESSER III for remaining personnel. Retention promotes a level of experience, expectation, and continuity of services that foster forward momentum and growth beyond many other factors.

### **Safety and Wellness Needs**

Big Spring ISD used ESSER I funds to supply its facilities with a variety of sanitizing strategies and products in an attempt to provide the safest environment possible for students and teachers to engage in face-to-face learning. The greatest need, however, would require much more funding than this particular grant offered; therefore, when ESSER III became a reality, the district knew the main priority would be upgrading

ventilation and filtration systems so that all stakeholders will be protected from most viruses, including and especially COVID-19, and other harmful microbes beyond such measures as hand sanitizers, misters, surface wipes, social distancing, and masks. These other methods will remain in place as needed, but better ventilation/filtration will add a necessary protective layer during these unprecedented, but starkly realistic, times. The goal is that campus doors remain open and classrooms remain functional and safe.

#### ESSER II

BSISD needs to take care of some crucial safety and security projects/upgrades, so the decision was made to supplant a portion of the local payroll with these funds. Local monies, then, could be allocated to meet these needs, which did not quite fit the allowable use of funds for COVID relief efforts.

The district will be installing new security cameras, replacing old cameras, and moving all cameras to a single digital platform that will provide more effective and efficient programming. Access control is also a priority for BSISD and will begin with exterior doors before moving to interior access controls. Vestibule remodeling is necessary on two campuses to ensure more secure building entrances, and new building maps need to be drafted and procured for safety upgrades. One campus must address some fire safety issues to get it's system up to code.

ESSER III		Use of Funds Breakdown	
	<b>Payroll</b>		<b>\$1,788,000</b>
		New IT staff for one-to-one devices	
		Extra-duty staff- beyond normal hours	
		Retention/Recruitment Stipends	
		Extra staff: professional & paraprofessional	
	<b>Contracted Services</b>		<b>\$752,000</b>
		Communities in Schools - SEL Support	
		Balanced Literacy Coaching	
		Texas Instructional Leaders training	
		Data Report training	
	<b>Supplies &amp; Materials</b>		<b>\$852,078</b>
		Software/hardware	
		School supplies for all students	
		Academic/diagnostic/accelerated programs	
	<b>Other Operating Costs</b>		<b>\$33,000</b>
		Professional Development Travel/Registrations	
	<b>Capital Outlay</b>		<b>\$6,198,011</b>
		Fan Coils for existing HVAC	
		Ionization air cleaning system	
		HVAC control system for all existing/new units	
		New evaporative coolers/roof repair to hold units	
20%	Academic Reservation	Divided among all of the above	<b>\$1,924,618</b>
ESSER II		Use of Funds Breakdown	
		Payroll/Retention Stipends (Supplanted local funds to be used for safety and security upgrades)	<b>\$4,283,433</b>

