

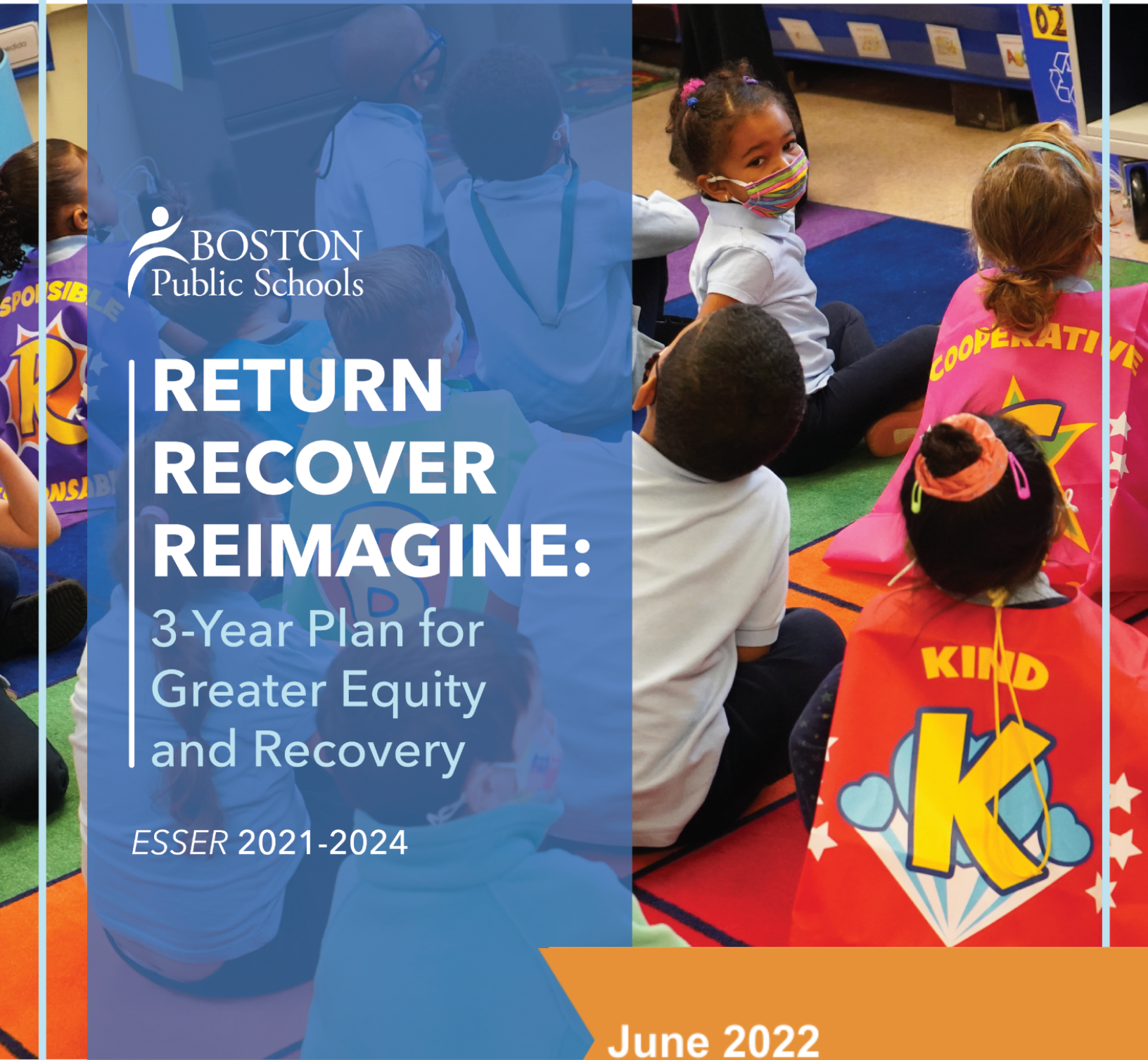


RETURN RECOVER REIMAGINE:

3-Year Plan for
Greater Equity
and Recovery

ESSER 2021-2024

June 2022





To the Boston Public Schools Community,

I am excited to share this update of the Return, Recover, Reimagine: 3-Year Plan for Greater Equity and Recovery. The COVID-19 global pandemic highlighted and exacerbated long standing inequities within our communities while posing new challenges we had not even contemplated prior to March 2020. One of the tools we have to address these inequities is ESSER Funding from the federal government. This one-time infusion of additional resources was designed to provide immediate relief to recover from the pandemic and address the new challenges created over the past two years. The funding was allocated over three years and flows through the states to cities.



Boston Public Schools (BPS) received \$431 million in total ESSER I, II, and III funds: an important investment in our work to accelerate learning and recovery, support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff, and address historic challenges in our school buildings. This funding represents approximately 10% of our annual spending in these years.

Achieving racial equity in education requires that we acknowledge the systemic barriers that student learners have faced because of racism. Our [racial equity tool](#), developed by our team, does this *and* helps us make better decisions for all students. Using this tool, we were able to launch a thoughtful process that centered the voices and focus on the experiences and needs of those historically marginalized and currently marginalized in BPS, including Black, Latinx, and Asian students, families, and staff members, English learners, students with disabilities, and all of their intersections.

Upon confirmation of the federal funding we were slated to receive, BPS committed to hearing directly from the community that will benefit most from the funding. This report details how funding decisions were made and accounted for by BPS leadership for ESSER II and ESSER III funds, and how input from the community informed those decisions. Our process included extensive input from the community and consultation from the ESSER Commission that included people just like you – students, families, teachers, leaders in the field of education, workforce development experts, community and faith based leaders, and so many of you that bring so many of those lived and learned experiences to our shared table. I am grateful for the feedback and recommendations you provided, and am confident that they made our plans stronger.

We heard loud and clear from you that ESSER funds needed to be allocated to ensure that BPS students with the greatest needs in and out of the classroom receive intense and accelerated support as they return to schools and recover from the pandemic. We also heard that we need to reimagine how BPS can build anew, creating a substantially more equitable school system designed for the success of our young people. For those reasons, we took the approach that ESSER needed to be a change management strategy as well - in other words, making changes to the system not only by what we invest in but through the process by which we select, communicate about, manage, and evaluate those investments. Rooted in the [2020-2025](#)



[Strategic Vision](#) and [School Committee Goals](#), we designed a process to focus spending on evidence-based strategies for equity in service of student achievement and school improvement in ways that are responsive to community needs.

All students need some of the same things *and* all students need individualized support to meet their individualized social, emotional, and academic needs. Some of those needs are based on the uniqueness of who each of our learners are.

As we strive to ensure equity of opportunity and enact anti-racist decisions, we are called upon to maintain focus on our values and how those values are demonstrated through our budgets. You will read about our seven priorities: 1) Strengthen Core Instruction; 2) Ensure Inclusion; 3) Accelerate Multilingual Learning; 4) Create High Quality Pathways; 5) Deliver Equitable Access and Opportunity; 6) Engage Families and Community; 7) Improve School Environment. You will learn about how no matter how money was allocated (at the district level, at the school level, through a multi-school level), each dollar benefits student learning.

Our goal for ESSER funding is to balance the pressure to spend money quickly with the need to be strategic about how to use this one-time funding well and not create future funding shortfalls. Mayor Wu and our Boston City Council partners have expressed their deep commitment to ensure our students have the teaching and support services they need to reach their full potential. Under the Mayor's leadership, BPS has the resources to address the immediate needs of schools, with a solid plan for long-term and sustained success for all of our students, families, and staff. As part of the ESSER sustainability plans, we are: 1) Prioritizing district investments that could make an impact with temporary programming; 2) Identifying one-time costs that could make an impact on students' experience far beyond the life of ESSER; 3) Pairing investments with complimentary investments that would be sustained on the annual BPS Operational budget; 4) Creating an evaluation strategy to help us understand which district initiatives have been implemented most successful so that we can prioritize sustaining the most impactful work after ESSER, and 5) Placing immediate costs on ESSER with a plan to transition those costs onto the annual BPS Operational budget.

We want you to continue to be a part of this process. You can learn more about how ESSER money is benefiting our school communities by [visiting here](#).

This report would be incomplete without extending my gratitude to everyone who makes up the BPS community. Your dedication and belief in our students and their potential is second to none, and is a constant source of inspiration and strength everyday. Our BPS team pulled off the impossible, teachers and staff went above and beyond, and all of you took on roles in education you never imagined. Thank you.

In partnership,

Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent, Boston Public Schools



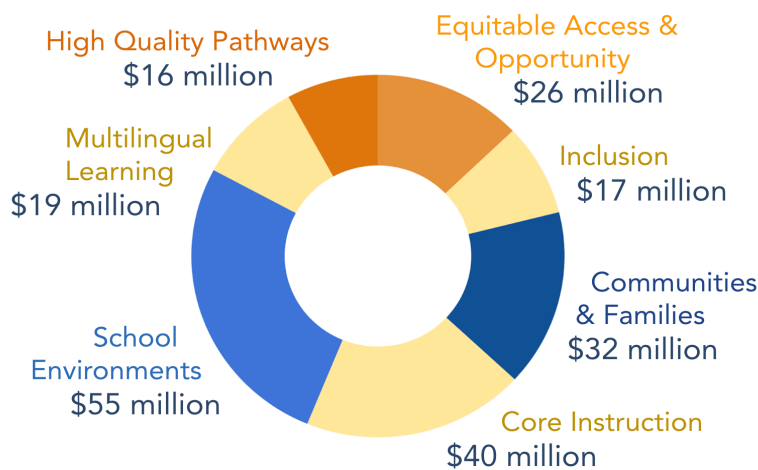
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The once-in-a-generation ESSER funds have two key purposes--help students and families recover from the pandemic while building a better Boston Public Schools for the future. **The focus of this plan is on ESSER II and ESSER III, which is supporting our efforts to Return, Recover, and Reimagine from Fall 2021 through Fall 2024.** We have a unique opportunity to use \$400 million dollars of funding from Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) grants to accelerate student learning and improve outcomes for our students.

BPS reviewed past studies of Boston’s needs, [commissioned additional research from the Rennie Center](#), and engaged the broader BPS Community. We examined our strengths to build on and leveraged research to build this plan. In order to determine where to invest, the BPS team identified evidenced-based practices in each of our Seven Focus areas, taking the time to carefully consider what leads to the most impact for our students.

Returning to in-person learning for students and accelerating recovery efforts required an infusion of immediate funding. For that reason, we allocated more than **\$50 million per year to schools** in FY22 and FY23 to make local decisions to accelerate outcomes and support social emotional recovery efforts. These decisions are at the school level and informed by school-based equity roundtables.

The remaining funds are managed centrally to provide programs, services, materials, and in some cases staff that benefit schools and their students directly. We used this approach in recognition that there are supports that are needed across many or all schools, or where specific equity and access gaps need to be addressed between schools. By covering essential services and purchases centrally, we free up school allocations to be used to address the specific needs of a given school community.



Our work has just begun. We have completed an important first phase: developing this plan and identifying initial investments in our schools and for our students, families, and capacity to ensure equity and excellence. Next we will ensure quality implementation, ongoing feedback with our families, focus on what the evidence says we need to do differently, and transparently report to our community. We will plan to strategically sustain the progress we make through ongoing funding, partnerships, and added capacity that will remain after the funding

ends. The Division of Accountability has been working closely with the Division of Finance to determine how we can ensure academic return on education investments in the short and long term, so as to sustain the investments yielding the greatest outcomes for the students who need the most on the general operational budget.



Stay up to date at: bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21





TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
RACIAL EQUITY PLANNING TOOL	8
DESIRED RESULTS AND OUTCOMES	9
STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY	11
Accountability ESSER Team	11
Guidance	11
Community Engagement	12
Funding Strategy	14
Timeline: Funding our Schools	17
Research and Evidence-Based Strategies	18
Equity-Focused, Accountable Approval Process: District & School Proposals	18
Budget Transparency	19
A CLOSER LOOK AT ESSER FUNDING DECISIONS	19
The BPS “Quality Guarantee”	19
Strengthen Core Instruction Investments	20
Ensure Inclusion Investments	23
Accelerate Multilingual Learning Investments	25
Create High Quality Pathways Investments	27
Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity Investments	29
Engage Families & Community Investments	32
Improve School Environments Investments	34
NEXT STEPS	35
Implementation	35
Impact	36
Monitor for Mid-Course Correction and Continuous Improvement	38
Evaluation	37
Updates and Additional Investments	39
APPENDICES	40
School-Directed Investments	41
District-Wide Investments	42
Community Engagement	43



INTRODUCTION

At BPS, each child in every classroom is entitled to an equitable, high-quality, and joyous education. Each child should have access to tools to unlock the greatness within them. BPS’s strategic commitment to equitable, high-quality education can only be achieved by eliminating the structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunity. As COVID-19 persists, so does our commitment to systemic change. We did not predict a global pandemic when we came together to develop our 2020-2025 Strategic Vision, but having that document gave us a roadmap that allowed us to focus our response, quickly allocate funding, provide access to information and instruction, and make resources available to meet the needs of students to ensure equitable outcomes.

The United States Federal Government took measures to quickly respond to pandemic, as did the City of Boston and Boston Public Schools. This plan explains in some detail two of our challenges: 1) responding to a global pandemic 2) responding to that pandemic while continuing to address racial and other inequalities. We transparently explain the process for our response so that we can be accountable to you – and all of our stakeholders. At the center of our response are the more than 54,000 students across our schools. 100% of ESSER funds are invested in the education of BPS students.

At the center of the federal government’s response is significant three year funding and an additional allocation from the City of Boston. For Boston Public Schools that means \$454 million over 3 years to both address one-time needs and strategically continue to work on eliminating structural barriers to an excellent and equitable education. This one-time funding is helpful, but it does not address the significant ongoing funding needed to address the past several years of declining enrollment. Currently, Boston is allocating an additional \$50 million in soft landings from our operational budget to avoid drastic cuts. However, hard decisions will need to be made over the next two to five years to avoid fiscal cliffs. ESSER funding is available until September of 2024 represents approximately 10% of our annual spending.

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What is ESSER?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The United States Department of Education (US DOE) acted quickly to provide financial support to school systems across the country. Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). Signed into law on March 20, 2021, the Department awarded these grants to State educational agencies to provide local educational agencies (LEAs), including districts and charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. ESSER funds are being distributed to LEAs in three rounds: ESSER I, ESSER II, and ESSER III.

For BPS, this means that we received \$431 million of federal ESSER funds. We also received \$23 million as an additional allocation to ESSER I from the City of Boston. In total, BPS received \$454 million to benefit the children of Boston. The following chart on the next page shows the timing of those funds.



	ESSER I	ESSER I - City of Boston Additional Allocation	ESSER II	ESSER III
Act Name	CARES Act	CARES Act	CRRSA Act	ARP Act
BPS Allocation	\$32 million	\$23 million	\$123 million	\$276 million
Receive Access to Funds	Spring 2020	Spring 2020	Fall 2021	Winter 2022
Deadline to Spend	September 2022	September 2022	September 2023	September 2024

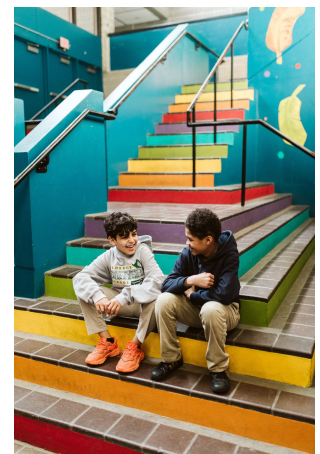
BPS leadership swiftly allocated ESSER I funds to immediately respond to and fully expend funds to support our students through the early stages of the pandemic. With strong input from schools and consultation from the community, funds were allocated in six areas: health and safety; food and nutrition services; expanded summer learning and academic supports; special education assessments and compensatory services; distance learning and technology; and family and student engagement. Costs that we couldn't have anticipated – such as personal protective equipment (PPE) – were covered by ESSER 1 funds, as well as other emergency relief funds through FEMA and other sources, so that our general operating budget could continue to fund our ongoing priorities.

The focus of this plan is on ESSER II and ESSER III, which is supporting our efforts to Return, Recover, and Reimagine from Fall 2021 through Fall 2024.

We will report to the School Committee and continue dialogue with the community and schools to ensure that ESSER investments impact the students, families and schools that need additional funding. We will continue to report to the community every 6 months through the end of the ESSER III grant.

RACIAL EQUITY PLANNING TOOL

The BPS [Racial Equity Planning Tool](#) has been an integral part of helping us actualize our commitment to close opportunity and achievement gaps through leveraging ESSER funds. It was also a key asset to anchor the decision-making process of how to allocate ESSER funds. We used the tool to ensure that we are driving toward our desired outcomes, grounded in data and community feedback to implement concrete strategies to address inequity. Since our last published [ESSER report](#) in July 2021, we have developed concrete strategies to mitigate existing and potential inequities based on what we learned from the data analysis. These strategies are present in the big-picture decisions that were made about funding allocation and the review process of each school and district proposal down to the details of implementation. We are now currently at step 5 of the Racial Equity Planning Tool: Implementation Plan.



The following sections match the steps of the Racial Equity Planning Tool and outline the process for the allocation of funds, district and school planning protocols, implementation, and accountability to reaching results.



DESIRED RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

What are we trying to achieve?

As we heard from our community, the one-time ESSER funds needed to be allocated to ensure that BPS students with the greatest needs in and out of the classroom receive intensive and accelerated support as they return to school and recover from the pandemic. COVID-19 impacts all students. However, according to [Boston Public Schools Equity Analysis](#), students, families, and staff do not all experience the pandemic in the same ways. Black, Latinx, and Asian families were more likely to experience unemployment and other income loss, leading to housing precarity and food insecurity; immigrant families of color experienced these disparities more acutely. Many students with disabilities and their families, and English Learners and their families, communicated that remote learning was particularly challenging to them. **Seven focus areas** for ESSER funding allocations were identified based on community feedback. The focus areas are designed with our students at the center, focusing on what they need in order to thrive.



1. Strengthen Instructional Core
2. Ensure Inclusion
3. Accelerate Multilingual Learning
4. Create High Quality Pathways
5. Deliver Equitable Access and Opportunity
6. Engage Families and Community
7. Improve School Environments

Additionally, our communities were clear we needed to reimagine how BPS can build anew, creating a substantially more equitable school system designed for the success of our young people. **For those reasons, we took the approach that ESSER needed to be a change management strategy as well - in other words, making changes to the system not only by what we invest in but through the process by which we select, communicate about, manage, and evaluate those investments.** Rooted in the [2020-2025 Strategic Vision](#), we designed a process to focus spending on evidence-based strategies for equity in service of student achievement and school improvement in ways that are responsive to community needs.

Using ESSER to help foster greater equity, excellence, and transparency in our system requires a comprehensive approach. To get this work right, we:

- Support plan development for evidence-based approaches and clear success metrics. Ensure all funds are linked to accountable plans that are informed by community needs.
- Develop and implement a clear and rigorous funding process based on identified needs. Ensure that BPS policies, plans and budgets advance the [Opportunity and Achievement Gaps \(OAG\) Policy \(1.1\)](#)



so that our schools are equitably funded to provide robust academic programming and social-emotional supports giving every child what they need.

- Identify district procedural inefficiencies that have or may cause threats to quality implementation of key ESSER school and district investments.
- Align ESSER funding priorities with the annual BPS operational budget planning for long-term sustainability when the one-time funding runs out.
- Increase transparency to the community, directly showing how funded programming leads to outcomes, especially for ELs, Students with Disabilities, and low income students.
- Focus on the two BPS Strategic Plan priorities that speak to the value of closing opportunity gaps and differentiating investments to ensure our students are getting the support they need to be successful: **4.1** (Fund all schools in a manner that meets the unique needs of the students they serve, with consideration given to English Learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, students at risk of dropping out, off-track youth, and other historically marginalized groups), and **4.2** (Improve funding formulas and create mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of resources generated through fundraising, partnerships, and grants). An example is our distribution to schools based on student populations and determining a formula to assess who experienced greater learning loss as a result of the pandemic, as explained in the school guidance.





STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY

Accountability ESSER Team

The Boston Public Schools developed an ESSER team inside the BPS Accountability Division to manage the design and programming decisions for our ESSER II and ESSER III. More specifically, this ESSER team works to synthesize the inputs from all the stakeholders engagement, manage the process to review funding requests and make allocations, then monitor and implement to positively impact our students. The ESSER team keeps equity at the center of this work in alignment with the district’s Strategic Vision and Opportunity and Achievement Gap policy. The ESSER team works in collaboration with the BPS Finance Division, which provides fiscal management of ESSER funding, and also works closely with the Academics Division, Division of Schools, and Office of Data and Accountability.

Guidance

Federal, State, and our own guidance ensures that money is spent where there is the highest student need.

Federal and State Guidance

Guidance from the federal government outlines what type of expenses are allowable for each of the three ESSER funding packages, examples include:

- Federal: 20% of ESSER III funds must be used for the implementation of evidence-based interventions aimed specifically at addressing learning loss, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after school programs, or extended school year programs. A full list of the federal guidance for each ESSER fund can be found on the [United States Department of Education website](#).
- State: At least \$10,000 of ESSER II funds must be spent on mental health supports. A full list of the state guidance for each ESSER fund can be found on the [MA DESE website](#).

BPS Guidance

BPS guidance ensured that all ESSER investments were aligned to the Strategic Vision and included feedback from the broader BPS Community. **Seven focus areas** for ESSER funding allocations were identified. The focus areas are designed with our students at the center, focusing on what they need in order to thrive.

1. **Strengthen Core Instruction:** To strengthen core instruction, we are accelerating our ongoing efforts to transform literacy instruction for all students in all schools and providing individualized academic supports students can access in and out of school.
2. **Ensure Inclusion:** To ensure inclusion and quality supports for students with disabilities, we are funding a multi-year strategy to build inclusion classrooms





within BPS, and identifying and addressing root causes of disproportionality.

3. **Accelerate Multilingual Learning:** To accelerate multilingual learning and provide better experiences for English Learners, we are providing students with immediate access to interventions and supports, while making long term investments in learning experiences that celebrate and support linguistic diversity.
4. **Create High Quality Pathways:** To create high quality pathways to the success for each student, we are dramatically expanding academic counseling, career planning, and rigorous coursework.
5. **Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity:** To deliver more equitable access and opportunity for students, we are addressing how our central office can support communities and distribute resources more equitably and also dramatically expand access to arts, athletics, and out of school enrichment.
6. **Engage Communities & Families:** To more authentically engage communities and families, we are redesigning the ways families will receive information and expanding the social emotional and mental health supports students receive.
7. **Improve School Environments:** To improve the school environments that our children learn in every day, we are making unprecedented investments in clean air and water, addressing Covid health and safety concerns, and are setting up long term improvements to how we maintain our buildings.

Additional BPS Guidance (School Investments Only)

In addition to the Federal, State, and BPS Guidance listed above, schools aligned their ESSER funding requests to their school improvement plan and included feedback from their school community, including their School Equity Roundtable. [To see the guidance shared with school leaders on July 9, 2021, please click here.](#)

Community Engagement

Superintendent Cassellius and the BPS ESSER team engaged stakeholders with diverse perspectives across our system. This work generated thorough insight and knowledge from students, parents/families, teachers, leaders of community partner organizations, elected and appointed officials, and many others. This feedback has been captured and synthesized in order to ensure the guidance and process created along with funding decisions respect the needs and interests of as many of our community members as possible.

In May 2021, the ESSER Commission was formed and the district began a new series of community engagement opportunities to gather feedback on how the district should most equitably and effectively allocate the ESSER funds. To engage our diverse BPS stakeholders, the district held over 35 engagements with 1500+ stakeholders, including students, families, educators, community partners, school leaders, and so many others. The Superintendent and the ESSER team gathered and incorporated robust feedback to inform the timeline, allocation formulas, and investments in the most equitable manner possible. This level of engagement will continue as results are reported back to schools communities, the district, and all stakeholders.

- **ESSER Commission:** This group of 33 community leaders reflect the rich diversity of our BPS community: students, parents/families, community partner organizations, City of Boston staff, BPS Task Forces, higher education partners, BPS principals, the Private Industry Council (PIC), philanthropic partners, the School Committee, faith-based partners, the Boston Teachers Union (BTU), and the business community. The ESSER Commission met regularly over the course of May 2021-July 2021 to



shape the investment planning process. To access meeting notes and recordings, please visit the [ESSER Commission section of our public website](#)

- Student Engagement:** Students are at the center of our work and student voice was vital in the ESSER planning process. Students will experience a significant difference in their education and benefit from these one-time investments. In addition to engaging the Boston Student Advisory Committee (BSAC) and the Superintendent’s Student Cabinet, BPS established an [ESSER Student Commission](#). Students applied to represent their peers on this Commission. The selected students shared their views on their priorities and proposed investments during their regular meetings in summer 2021.

- Community Engagement Meetings:** BPS convened meetings that were open to any member of the BPS community, including community members with the lived and learned experiences of students who are currently and historically under-resourced by systems. Those special population meetings included gatherings of the District English Learner Advisory Committee and the English Learner Task Force, the District Wellness Task Force, the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, the Opportunity Gaps Task Force, the City-Wide Parent Council, the Boston Teacher Union (BTU), and the Return Recover & Reimagine Commission (both adult and student Commissions), among others.

- Educator Feedback:** In addition to having educators participate in the community meetings mentioned above (BTU meeting and the Parent Leaders Meeting), BPS partnered with the BTU to have educators share their ideas for ESSER funding on a [WikiWisdom](#) Forum. Ten of the contributors to the forum reviewed the submissions to craft seven proposed solutions as a part of their final report. See Community Appendix for more details.

- Family Survey:** In spring 2021, BPS launched a Family Needs Survey that was offered in 10 languages (See Community Appendix). It solicited responses from almost 12,000 families. The survey results provided vital information about the opinions, concerns, and priorities of parents/families in

OVER 1500 BOSTONIANS WORKING TOGETHER

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Listening to diverse stakeholders citywide facilitates timely, equitable investments

ESSER Commission

33 Community Leaders, 6 meetings

Student Engagement

Student Voice is centered through the Boston Student Advisory Committee, Superintendent’s Student Cabinet, and an ESSER Student Commission

Community Engagement

15 community meetings engaged hundreds

Educator Feedback

Multiple feedback loops include a BTU meeting and WikiWisdom forum

Family Survey

12,000 families responded to a family needs survey

School Community Feedback

All schools held Equity Roundtables

School Leader Feedback

All School Leader calls and cabinet meetings



COVID-19 recovery. To see the full report, [Defining a New Normal: Exploring Key Findings from Boston Public Schools' Family Climate Survey](#), please visit our BPS website.

- **School Community Engagement:** Approximately half of the ESSER II and ESSER III dollars were given directly to schools. Educators, school teams, and families are closest to our students and therefore, they should have significant input as to how this funding is spent. Local, equitable decision-making allows schools to quickly meet the urgent needs of students, especially those who most need support. Each school has been trained in the School Equity Roundtable tool to make the best local decisions possible. School-based Equity Roundtables are conversations among a group of stakeholders that reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity of the school community. As of Feb. 2022, 100% of schools engaged their families and school communities through at least one Equity Roundtable in spring 2021 and fall 2021. In addition, schools will continue to keep open lines of communications with their students and families on the progress of ESSER investments. See [the school appendix](#) to learn more about your school's priorities and how your school is keeping the school community informed.
- **School Leader Feedback:** In addition to getting school leader feedback from representatives in the ESSER Commission, the ESSER team joined five All Schools Leader Calls and two School Leader Cabinet meetings in May, June, and December 2021. We received critical information that informed school allocations, timing of ESSER funds distribution, and school guidance. In addition, we heard opinions and concerns on the distribution of ESSER funds. We also provided ESSER Office hours three times a week from July 2021 through March 2022 to hear more individualized feedback and/or address concerns.

The Community Engagement Appendix includes a comprehensive list of the initial deep stakeholder engagement that took place to inform the ESSER investments.

Funding Strategy

An average of over \$50 million per year for each year of ESSER school investments is going directly to schools, representing more than 40% of total ESSER funding over 3 years. Schools developed proposals collaboratively with their communities and submitted requests that met the federal, state, and BPS guidance. We will provide an additional \$11.5 million depending on the level of more nuanced needs, such as student disability, students experiencing homelessness, and need for English Learner programs. Please see the subsection *School Plan Allocation Strategy* section for more details.

The remaining funds are reaching students through different channels. **Over \$200 million in district-wide investments are equitably and efficiently distributing services across schools while building lasting district infrastructure** - from transparent data systems to culturally responsive library collections - to ensure equity. These are programs, services, materials, and in some cases staff that benefit schools and their students directly, but are planned, purchased, and supported through the district. We used this approach particularly where the needs are across many or all schools, or where specific equity and access gaps need to be addressed among schools. By covering these costs centrally, schools have the additional resources from their ESSER school investments and autonomy to address the specific needs of their school community.



In addition, we are allocating **\$8 million in funding for future investments that will foster innovative practices across schools and \$10 million for investments to further strengthen community partnerships and support.**

The table illustrates the current plan for spending among School Plans, District-wide investments, Cross-School Innovation, and Community Investments for ESSER II and ESSER III.

ESSER II and ESSER III Type	Anticipated 3 Year Total (2021-2024)
School Plan Investments	\$161,500,000
District-Wide Investments	\$207,424,645
Cross School Innovation Investments	\$8,000,000
Community Investments	\$10,000,000
*Additional COVID Mitigation	\$3,067,107
**Indirect	\$9,315,156
Total	\$399,306,908

*The district reserved a portion of the funding to support students and respond to emerging circumstances (including the ongoing trajectory of the pandemic). Funds will be used for COVID mitigation measures in FY23 and FY24 or programmatic funding. Subsequent reports will reflect how this funding is used.

**[Indirect](#) funds are set aside by public agencies, including the City of Boston and BPS, to cover the costs of administering, evaluating, and reporting on a grant. This percentage of ESSER or other grant funding used for Indirect is determined by parameters set by the City of Boston and the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#).

School Plan Investments Allocation Strategy

As determined by the allocation structure, schools directly received funding of \$50 million in FY22. There was lengthy and intentional discussion about how the school funding should be allocated to be most equitable. During community meetings, four internal sessions with all school leaders and two School Leader Cabinet meetings in May and June of 2021, we received feedback that it was critically important that school based funds were allocated based on need rather than equally across schools, and schools receive funds as soon as possible while also ensuring that this once-in-a-generation funding is used deliberately and strategically.

With the guidance of the [ESSER Commission](#) (which included school leaders, superintendents, students, family, and teacher representatives), BPS is using a per pupil formula where schools receive \$813 for students with special needs, English learner, or low-income designations. This funding formula ensures that



schools with higher concentrations of students who fall into the high-need groups receive more funding. If a student falls into one of the categories (special education, English learner, or experiencing poverty), their school is awarded \$813. If a student falls into two of the specified categories, their school is receiving \$1,626 (\$813*2). If a student falls into all three of the categories, their school is receiving \$2,439 (\$813*3). A school's allocation is the total of per pupil funding they receive for students in each of the three categories.

Category	Enrollment	Per Pupil Amt	Category Total
All Students	48,693	–	–
Special Education	9,081	\$813	\$7,387,131
English Learners	15,016	\$813	\$12,215,082
Low Income	37,368	\$813	\$30,397,787

**This table has been updated to reflect a new per pupil amount based on including schools that are not traditionally funded by WSF and taking out schools that are receiving ESSER funding directly from DESE.*

In early July, \$50 million was allocated to schools for FY22. [To see each school's allocation for FY22, click here.](#) Schools will receive \$50 million in FY23. Currently, FY23 school allocations are being finalized using the most recent projected school enrollment. We will provide schools with an additional \$11.5 million depending on the level of more nuanced needs, such as student disability, students experiencing homelessness, and need for English Learner programs across the remaining years.





Timeline: Funding our Schools

As mentioned in the Introduction, this plan focuses on ESSER II and ESSER III funds. ESSER I funds have been fully expended and were allocated prior to this plan with a focus on returning to safe, in-person learning. Boston Public Schools received ESSER II and ESSER III funds from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) during the 2021-2022 school year and are being used to fund the School Plans and centrally-deployed, district-wide investments. Because we have an additional year to spend ESSER III, we plan to fully encumber and expend ESSER II before spending ESSER III.

As the timeline illustrates, planning for School and District-wide investments began in the Summer 2021 before the district had access to ESSER funds. School leaders requested that we prioritized ESSER district investments directly impacting schools so that leaders were able to align their school ESSER proposals to district initiatives. ESSER investments will continue through the end of ESSER III.

Immediate School ESSER Funds

We heard from the community that it was critically important that schools receive funds as soon as possible, that school leaders engage their communities to help inform how they spend their funds, and that the use of funds demonstrate impact on student outcomes. To quickly distribute funds to schools, Superintendent Cassellius was able to secure interim funding from the City of Boston as we waited to receive funds in Fall 2021. Schools were then able to request early partial funding July 9, 2021 through August 9, 2021 using a simplified [Optional Early ESSER School Request Form](#). *45 schools made this request for urgent funding through a complete ESSER School Request Form. Those schools were approved and received their immediate funding August 2021 through September 2021.*

TIMELINE

100% of funds are invested in the education of BPS students.

Here's how we are making that happen

SCHOOL INVESTMENTS

- JULY 2021: Allocations determined
- JULY 2021-AUG 2021: Proposals for [immediate funding](#) developed & submitted by [45 schools](#)
- JULY 2021-AUG 2021: Proposals for [Immediate Funding](#) Reviewed
- JULY 2021-SEPT 2021: [Immediate Funding](#) Distributed to Schools
- AUG 2021-FEB 2022: Proposals aligned to school improvement plans are developed and submitted. Plans that were not approvable revised and resubmitted
- AUG 2021-FEB 2022: Proposals Reviewed
- AUG 2021-MARCH 2022: Funds distributed

DISTRICT INVESTMENTS

- JULY 2021-SEPT 2021 Proposals developed & submitted
- AUG 2021-SEPT 2021 Proposals reviewed & prioritized
- AUG 2021-NOV 2021 Funds distributed

CROSS SCHOOL & COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Planning will take place Summer 2022



School ESSER Proposals and Accountable Plans

To ensure all school ESSER proposals are linked to accountable school improvement plans that are informed by community needs, schools were given additional time to leverage ESSER funds in a more [detailed ESSER Required proposal](#). This proposal was due no later than October 18, 2021 (former deadline October 1, 2021). Although the majority of schools submitted their ESSER proposal by this deadline, 70% of schools needed to revise their ESSER proposals due to the following most common mistakes: school improvement plan access or alignment, equity and opportunity assurances, budget justifications, and budget specificity (see Rigorous and Equity Process for more details). Therefore, the deadline was extended to ensure these funds included school community feedback and effectively are spent to positively impact student outcomes.

Cross-School Innovation and Community Investments

Cross-School Innovation and Community Investment planning will take place this summer and fund programs in these areas in school year 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. More information on these can be found in the Next Steps of the ESSER Plan.

Research and Evidence-Based Strategies

To identify evidence-based opportunities to fund, the ESSER team, BPS Research and Evaluation team, Academics teams, and community research partners identified practices and interventions that have shown significant student impact, especially for students with disabilities, English learners, and low-income students. In addition, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) compiled a national review of research describing effective practices. Schools were given access to evidence-based practices on BPS Research team's website. The [BPS internal website](#) includes research practice guides and one-pagers on impactful practices in the following areas: (1) professional development, (2) high dosage tutoring, (3) social emotional learning and school climate, and (4) student well-being. Schools are also able to search for evidence-based/research-based strategies.

Select district offices received support to create proposals that would build on existing initiatives and other proposed ESSER investments. Throughout the process, issues of sustainability were considered; this one time funding opportunity is better suited for one-time costs such as professional development, capital improvements, temporary staff increases to address increased demand from the pandemic, and other efforts that are lasting without ongoing budgetary impact (such as permanent staffing increases or launching of initiatives that have a long timeframe and are not supported by BPS operating budget).

Equity-Focused, Accountable Approval Process: District & School Proposals

We heard from the community that it was critically important that funds positively impact student outcomes, especially students impacted by the pandemic. To ensure that funds went to equitable solutions, school and district leaders were asked to answer questions that directly spoke to issues of equity and inequality. Every single school and district investment plan required the following information:

- Research or evidence to support proposed investment



- Aligned investment to Strategic Plan Priorities and/or School Improvement Plans, ESSER Focus Areas and District Measures
- Addressed long term impact on Students, Schools, District Offices, Families and Communities
- Description of what academic area they are seeking to improve over the long term
- Stakeholders who were involved in or who influenced the creation of the proposed initiative. School teams are required to engage through the Equity Roundtable meetings to engage a diverse set of school-based stakeholders in decision making around ESSER allocations
- Costs that might continue after ESSER and plans for sustaining or phasing out the initiative

**[To see the select criteria used to review school proposals, click here.](#)

Proposals were submitted by district departments and school teams, but the monitoring of the implementation and measurement of progress are key elements in ensuring equity. Districts are submitting work plans and schools are submitting School Improvement Plans that outline how they are delivering on their priorities. Over the coming years, data will be collected to measure progress in the areas that each district and school have identified as directly aligned to their ESSER investments. Taking the time to carefully consider what will lead to the most impact for our students is a key step in the long-term impact of these federal dollars. Please see the *Next Steps* Section for more details.

Budget Transparency

The BPS Finance team recognizes the critical role of transparency in building confidence in our fiscal stewardship and appreciated the actionable feedback. To meet this challenge, BPS has partnered with Allovue Inc., an education finance technology company to upgrade our technical process for allocating funds to schools. This will also help us align budgets to the Strategic Vision and Office of Achievement Gap Policy Goals. And finally, to directly address the recommendations from DESE, we anticipate improved public reporting to external stakeholders on budget and spending, including better school-by-school reporting. We are improving fiscal transparency over the next 12-18 months.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ESSER FUNDING DECISIONS

The BPS “Quality Guarantee”

The District has developed a “Quality Guarantee” - a list of resources, opportunities, and supports that should be available at every school and for every classroom in Boston Public Schools. The **seven focus areas for ESSER funding allocations are supporting our BPS “Quality Guarantee” efforts to ensure that every student at each school has a high quality educational experience to explore new areas, pursue their interests, become acquainted with exciting career fields, and develop their talents.** The quality guarantee serves as a social contract between the district and the community about what should be true in every school, outlining expectations as follows:

- *Strengthen Core instruction, Ensure Inclusion, Accelerate Multilingual Learning, and Create High Quality Pathways* investments collectively support our district overall actions to provide (1) high quality ethnically and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, and (2) provide career pathways for all students.



- *Deliver Equitable Access and Opportunity Investments* support our overall district efforts to provide students with enrichments, from exploring engineering and science through a robotics team, to balancing academic work through project-based learning curriculums and AP classes, to expressing art through various activities, to improving student health through physical education and sports, and to strengthening leadership skills through debate clubs, student government, and other student-led extracurricular activities.
- *Engage Families and Communities Investments* support our overall district Quality Guarantee effort to provide resources to students and families.
- *School Environment Investments* provide some support toward our district's efforts to ensure that all students have access to 21st century buildings with science labs, technology, libraries, gymnasiums, and performance green spaces.

ESSER is playing a key role in expanding these kinds of opportunities for students in the short term, with the annual BPS operating budget being a critical lever in meeting our Quality Guarantee sustainably now and into the future.

Over 230 district and school proposals were reviewed. BPS is excited to share what ESSER II and ESSER III are funding. This section of the ESSER plan details the data from district reports, the [Rennie Report \(2021\)](#), community feedback from over 35 engagements with 1500+ stakeholders, and how ESSER funds are being spent. Together the data and community input deepened our understanding of the needs and priorities of the community, and informed key investments to address those needs.

ONE

Strengthen Core Instruction Investments

We are funding \$43,157,549 in district investments to strengthen core instruction

BPS is outperforming most other urban districts across the Commonwealth in ELA, Math, and Science. Prior to COVID, incremental progress was made between 2017 and 2019. Although all grade levels and major student groups scored lower on the MCAS in ELA, Math, and Science in 2021 than they did in 2019, Boston Public Schools experienced smaller declines than the state and other large urban districts. In addition, Boston is among the top-performing large-city school districts in the nation, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). For example, out of the 27 urban districts that participated in the test, Boston's 2019 math score was significantly higher than the scores in 18 districts, on par with another six, and only lower than the scores in two districts.¹ Likewise, Boston's 2019 NAEP reading score was significantly higher than the scores in 13 districts, on par with another 10, and only lower than the scores in three districts.² **However, persistent racial achievement and opportunity gaps must be explicitly addressed.** For example, in the area of English Language Arts, achievement gaps persist amongst major student groups, with White and Asian students consistently outperforming their Black and Latinx peers. English learners and Students with disabilities consistently have the lowest performance, as seen by the last 20 years of 4th grade ELA MCAS, PARCC, and Next Generation MCAS data.

¹ <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/dst2019/pdf/2020015XB8.pdf>

² <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/dst2019/pdf/2020016XB8.pdf>



As we sharpen our focus on student outcomes, **we acknowledge that we must do more to strengthen tier one (core) instruction and provide quality guarantees to each student at each school to address these persistent achievement gaps.** This is especially true for our students of color as well as our multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners with disabilities. We have taken significant steps to strengthen core instruction: (1) Adopted new high-quality curriculum materials in Literacy and Science; (2) Codified Focus as the district-adopted curriculum for grades K-2 and Excellence for All for most schools serving grades 3-6 schools and StudySync in grades 7-12; and (3) Complemented these instructional resources by developing a universal balanced assessment strategy. However, we still need to address a significant structural challenge. We need to uniformly implement high quality instruction across schools where: (1) each school has high-quality, culturally sustaining instructional curriculum and materials; (2) every teacher at each school has received effective professional development to expertly teach the curriculum and use the materials to increase student discourse in support of critical thinking and meet student needs; and (3) each school implements a consistent district assessment approach to measure and adjust instructions based on student needs. We also need to provide consistent access to advanced coursework across schools and student populations. Also, due to COVID, there is an increased need for additional academic resources in schools (e.g., additional learning time for learning outside the traditional school day and year and additional staff for tutoring or providing individual services).

**ESSER
District
Investments
Address
Challenges**

We are funding \$43,157,549 in district ESSER investments to fully actualize our goal. We are starting by ensuring that we can identify and build on the assets and needs of individual students. We are strengthening the quality of instruction students receive by 1. purchasing high quality, culturally responsive ELA materials for all schools that are specifically selected to also meet the needs of English Learners and is aligned to the Science of Reading and core curricula. We are also investing in interventions to address differentiated student needs and provide comprehensive school libraries. In addition, we are helping educators understand and use those materials to meet students where they are by expanding and accelerating the district's professional learning strategies, including scaling innovative approaches like the Telescope Network's teacher-led learning. We are focusing additional individualized support, such as tutoring, for students who were most impacted by the pandemic. In response to the considerable need to increase access to a well rounded and rigorous curriculum, we are working toward closing gaps in access and improving program quality in physical education, social emotional learning, and health education. We are accelerating the district's High School Redesign efforts by expanding AP/IB programming.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are strengthening core instruction. Read more about them in the [district appendix](#).

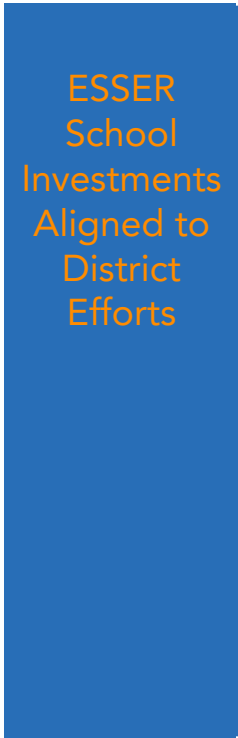
- **Equitable Literacy** - Increase student mastery of literacy across all grades through high quality curricula, interventions for students with reading difficulties, literacy specialists and instructional coaches in BPS high needs schools, and comprehensive professional learning for educators across the district. (Page 15 in [district appendix](#))



- **Equitable and Enlivened Library Programs** - Support literacy and address opportunity gaps by providing every school with a refurbished library collection and information science technology, and complementing a district-wide expansion of library staffing into every school. (Page 17 in [district appendix](#))
- **Outdoor Teaching and Learning in Science** - Deepen science learning experiences by creating over 60 new outdoor learning spaces, and providing students across schools with expanded access to rites of passage trips to nature and science sites. (Page 22 in [district appendix](#))
- **Ethnic Studies** - Develop the materials and professional expertise to offer Ethnic studies at all secondary schools by 2025. (Page 23 in [district appendix](#))
- **Academic Recovery Directors** - Support school Instructional Leadership teams to develop academic recovery plans for the communities by providing dedicated leadership coaches for those teams. (Page 2 in [district appendix](#))
- **Developing and Elevating Educator Expertise** - Complement other district professional learning programs through an expansion of the teacher-led Telescope professional learning network and the Teacher Leadership Fund. (Page 19 in [district appendix](#))
- **Student Recovery through Instructional Interventions** - Address learning loss and provide native language support for English Learners through district-wide access to digital interventions such as Nearpod, Impagine, and Lexia. (Page 18 in [district appendix](#))
- **Balanced, Anti-Racist Assessment Systems and Data Literacy** - Equip educators to better support academic recovery through high-quality, equitable assessments, including an expansion of assessments available in native language other than English. (Page 20 in [district appendix](#))
- **Remote Learning** - Minimize learning disruptions by providing the Edmentum learning platform to students with medical conditions who are unable to attend school, and providing early elementary students enrichment and tutoring during periods when they were quarantined at home due to COVID exposure. (Page 22 in [district appendix](#))
- **Tutoring Access through Paper Education** - Support immediate academic recovery by providing each student access to tutoring in all subjects. (Page 24 in [district appendix](#))
- **High School Redesign** - Better equip secondary students for college and career success by creating a comprehensive Secondary Schools team to develop expanded opportunities for students CTE, AP/IB, and Early College experiences. (Page 52 in [district appendix](#))
- **Physical Education** - Improve student well-being by closing program quality and access gaps to Physical Education instruction. (Page 31 in [district appendix](#))
- **Health Education** - Close opportunity and access gaps in health education by expanding high quality health programming to twelve additional schools with grades 6-8. (Page 33 in [district appendix](#))



- **Acceleration Academies** - Accelerate academic recovery with an emphasis on meeting the needs of English Learners at high needs schools through February and April vacation academies. (Page 46 in [district appendix](#))



BPS Schools across the district are using their ESSER school investments to strengthen the instructional core through inclusive practices that support the various modalities in which students learn, by increasing access to high quality, standards align, culturally and linguistically affirming unit design, increasing student discourse in support of critical thinking, and through the equitable literacy. More specifically, they are:

- Investing in rigorous and culturally representative curriculum and materials
- Investing in Transformation Coaches, Paraprofessionals, and Reading Interventionists, among other key roles.
- Increasing teacher capacity to deliver small group instruction and offer more differentiated learning by adding more paras in the classroom.
- Investing in existing staff by providing stipends for professional development and collaboration time.
- Partnering with organizations such as Lego Robotics

To read more details about ESSER School Investments for a specific school, please see the [school appendix](#).

TWO **Ensure Inclusion Investments**

We are funding \$17,104,615 in district investments to support inclusion for students with disabilities

BPS is working toward our guarantee of quality to improve academic outcomes and address the persistent achievement and opportunity gaps for our Students with Disabilities and English Learners with disabilities (ELSWDs). Students with disabilities in BPS have achievement levels that are below grade level expectations. Only 9% of fourth graders score at proficient or above on the National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment. Five percent of eighth graders score proficient or above in NAEP reading. The rate for 4th grade math is 12% and for eighth grade math is 4%. MAP and MCAS scores are lower for students with disabilities compared to other students. Additionally, ELSWDs represent the lowest performing group academically. While ELSWDs are generally less likely than other students to be placed in an emotional impairment substantially separate classroom, English Learners are twice as likely as other students to be identified with a communication disability. When looking at ELSWDs with a communication disability who are also placed in a substantially separate setting, the likelihood increases to



2.25 in the SY20-21 data. In addition, Black male students are 3.6 times as likely to be placed in an emotional impairment, substantially separate classroom than other student groups.

Inclusion is one of the core values of the 2020-2025 strategic plan, and many schools have also identified inclusion as a core school value. **The Office of English Learners and Office of Special Education have focused their work around creating Equity and Access to the Least Restrictive Environment for all our students.**

ESSER District Investments Address Challenges

We are funding \$17,104,615 in district investments to do better. In addition to providing students with disabilities immediate access to compensatory services to recover academically and recoup learning loss caused by the pandemic, it is clear that dramatically expanding access to learning in an inclusive setting must be a core component of supporting students with disabilities. We are working with communities to plan for and expand inclusion programming in as many as half of BPS schools throughout the life of ESSER, while equipping educators to successfully support students in these settings through professional learning and coaching. This process requires intensive coaching to not only change services, but change the culture of schools around how students with disabilities are provided every opportunity available so they can thrive.

We will also specifically assess and address disproportionality among students of color, focusing on preventing overidentification of Black students with emotional impairment and English Learners with Communication Disorders. Part of the strategy to prevent overidentification will be to better support schools and educators to more fully understand and meet the social emotional needs of students in general education settings.

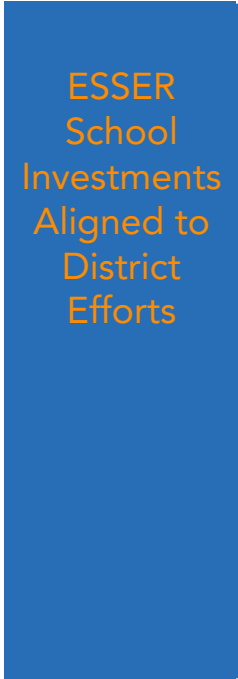
Both the expansion of inclusion and steps to address disproportionality will benefit students who are dual identified as English Learners with disabilities. To provide immediate support to this group of students, we will also deploy additional staff support to classrooms serving high numbers of English learners with disabilities.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are supporting students with disabilities. Read more about them in the [district appendix](#).

- **Expanding Inclusion and Inclusive Practices Across the District** - Expand the number of schools offering full or partial inclusion through intensive coaching and school-community driven planning. (Page 41 in [district appendix](#))
- **Building Special Education Expertise** - Identify and address program quality and disproportionality among schools serving students with Emotional Impairments, Specific Disabilities, and Communication Disorders. (Page 43 in [district appendix](#))
- **Infrastructure for Multilingual Learners** - Part of the larger investment in supporting Multilingual Learners will be centrally deployed staff to support classrooms serving high numbers of ELs who are also identified as having a disability. (Page 45 in [district appendix](#))



- **Compensatory Services for Students with Disabilities** - Provide individual students additional services in or out of school time to address learning and service loss during the pandemic. (Page 42 in [district appendix](#))



Listed below are some ways BPS Schools across the district are using their ESSER school investments to ensure inclusion. To read more details about ESSER School Investments for a specific school, please see the [school appendix](#).

- Invest in teachers and paras professional development to support students with disabilities in a more inclusive environment.
- Invest in para professionals to support instructional recovery, increase teacher capacity to have 1:1 or small group sessions with students and support a more inclusive environment for students with disabilities.
- Invest in culturally relevant, grade-level text and curricular AND increase access to grade-level standards for ELLs by investing in adult capacity, training, and collaboration time.
- Invest in technology to make instruction more accessible to students with disabilities.
- Stipend staff to provide before and after school SEL programming and supplemental academic services
- Expand and Strengthen Families and Community Partnerships

THREE Accelerate Multilingual Learning Investments

We are funding \$19,017,725 in District-wide investments that are specifically supporting English learner students.

We acknowledge that we must do more to consistently approach multilingualism as an asset across the district. The diversity of our students should be celebrated and our classrooms should be filled with the sounds of many languages and learning from every culture. We also realize that English Learners saw the largest decline on the MCAS in ELA, Math, and Science in 2021 than they did in 2019 compared to other groups. However, some improvement has been made. As of December 2021, 72% of students are receiving full English language services. Roughly 90% of EL students have the appropriately credentialed educator, a substantial increase compared to 68% in October 2021. In addition, 85% of ELs are receiving the appropriate type of instruction compared to 68% in October. In addition, the district is also leading the Commonwealth in access to dual-language programs offered in Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese. This includes Massachusetts’ first Vietnamese bilingual preschool, Preschool, and the nation’s first two way immersion Haitian Creole preschool at the Mattahunt School.



We must ensure that English Learners have equitable access to rigorous instructional programs that allow them to thrive academically and leverage the strengths of multilingualism to develop English proficiency.

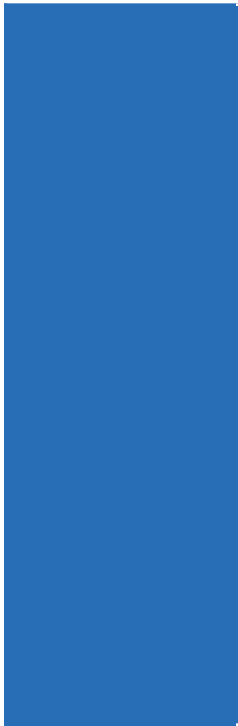
**ESSER
District
Investments
Address
Challenges**

We are funding \$19,017,725 in District-wide investments that are specifically supporting English learner students. We are using ESSER funds to build on the successes of current dual language programs and increase native language access and instruction by setting up the sustainable conditions to support multilingual learning across the district, be it in dual language schools, Transitional Bilingual Education, Heritage language programs, [Sheltered English Immersion \(SEI\)](#) language specific, or general education programming. To fully center multilingualism as an asset, we are building central office infrastructure to increase native language programming; assist more students to achieve Seal of Biliteracy; provide bilingual support and language accessibility for English Learners with disabilities and special populations such as [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\)](#) and newcomer ELs; and more effectively and transparently meet our obligations to serve students in compliance with agreements between BPS and the Department of Justice and the META.

To make the district more inclusive to English Learners and their families, we are cultivating more educators who are bilingual and those who are certified to specifically support English Learners, and we are more broadly addressing language and information access barriers. To address the urgent recovery needs of English learners, we are investing in the systems necessary to understand the needs of these students and targeted interventions. The district has identified digital interventions that can provide students out-of-school support in their native language, and are providing out of school opportunities for learning, such as Acceleration Academies, that are specifically designed to meet the needs of ELs.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are specifically supporting students with disabilities. Please note that these investments are included in the [district appendix](#)

- **Infrastructure for Multilingual Learners**- Develop the materials, expertise, and systems to better service English Learners, including: multilingual and heritage language curricula, program supports for special populations of EL students such as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and more transparent comprehensive reporting on and monitoring of student needs and service levels. (Page 45 in [district appendix](#))
- **Student Recovery through Instructional Interventions**- Address learning loss and provide native language support for English Learners through district-wide access to digital interventions such as Nearpod, Impagine, and Lexia. (Page 18 in [district appendix](#))
- **Acceleration Academies**- Accelerate academic recovery with an emphasis on meeting the needs of English Learners at high needs schools through February and April vacation academies. (Page 46 in [district appendix](#))



- **Assessments for Multilingual Learners**- Ensure that all students start the year with accurate EL level data by investing in professional learning and staff support for mandatory WIDA testing. (Page 49 in [district appendix](#))
- **Balanced, Anti-Racist Assessment Systems and Data Literacy**- Equip educators to better support academic recovery through high-quality, equitable assessments, including an expansion of assessments available in native language other than English. (Page 20 in [district appendix](#))
- **Translation and Interpretation Services**- Address information access barriers and leverage the assets of the BPS community through additional translation and interpretation equipment, and by training interested, bi-lingual staff and community members to formally serve as interpreters. A focus of these efforts are to provide better language access options to families of students with disabilities who are not native speakers of English. (Page 48 in [district appendix](#))
- **Enrollment and Registration Access for English Learner Families**- Address information and access barriers for English Learner families by targeting additional information and support for enrollment and registration to these communities. (Page 50 in [district appendix](#))



Listed below are some ways BPS Schools across the district are using their ESSER school investments to address the urgent recovery needs of English learners. Read more details about ESSER Investments for a specific school in the [school appendix](#).

- Increase ESL teacher’s FTE to accelerate instruction
- Invest in para professionals to support instructional recovery and increase teacher capacity to have 1:1 or small group sessions with students
- Invest in culturally relevant, grade-level text and curricular AND increase access to increase access to grade-level standards for ELLs by investing in adult capacity and training
- Stipend staff to provide before and after school SEL programming and supplemental academic services
- Expand and Strengthen Families and Community Partnerships

FOUR Create High Quality Pathways Investments

We are funding \$23,326,654 in district-wide investments to build High Quality Pathways as key supports to help students more effectively plan and prepare for college, career, and life success.

Boston graduates (who are ready for college, career, and life) have the power to find goals worth seeking, to figure out how to reach them, and to adapt as the world changes around them. These



graduates have the power to navigate new situations and the skills that will enable them to move through any barriers they find along the way. When we analyze our own achievement and systemic structures, we acknowledge that we have to do more to create high quality pathways. In 2020 only 43.4% of all 4-Year Graduates were identified as College, Career and Life Ready. The measure includes BPS graduates who attain at least two of the three following criteria:

- Attendance of 94% or better;
- Grade Point Average of 2.7 or better;
- Engaged in Rigorous Coursework; and
- Complete Anywhere, Anytime Learning opportunities

To ensure our students meet the MassCore Requirements and are college, career, and life ready, we are implementing Foundation +Core Four. All BPS schools are providing support and opportunities to all students to build a strong foundation through inclusionary practices and native literacy through [MassCore](#). In May of 2021, the Boston School Committee adopted MassCore Graduation Requirements for the class of 2026 and beyond. [MassCore](#) graduation requirements were implemented for 9th graders in the fall of 2022. These rigorous requirements will make it more likely for students to enroll in college and earn a degree. Supporting students to meet the challenge of the MassCore, and graduate on-time, requires improvements to instructional practice and the implementation of the district’s Multitiered System of Support, being rolled out simultaneously. In addition to the foundation, schools will strategically select supports based on their school community needs under the Core Four: 1, Pre-Advancement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP), 2. International Baccalaureate (IB), 3. Early College and Dual Enrollment, and 4. Career and Technical Programs and Opportunities.

**ESSER
District
Investments
Address
Challenges**

ESSER is helping to support these efforts by funding \$23,326,654 in district-wide investments to create High Quality Pathways key supports to help students more effectively plan and prepare for college and career success. The support begins with elementary and middle school and includes broad support for secondary success. Recognizing that academic success in early grades and middle schools sets the stage for challenges and successes in high school, we are providing all students in grades K-8 access to academic counseling. These counselors will use best practices from the field of guidance counseling to both support students with managing their own short term academic recovery, and help schools and individual students prepare for high school. Naviance, a leading tool for post-secondary success planning, will be available for all middle grades students as well.

To support the renewal & redesign of our high schools BPS is investing in resources to sustain and deepen the reach of current pathway programs and expand the district’s portfolio of Early College and Innovation Pathways programs.

BPS is building a central infrastructure to create pathways across schools that are inclusive of career and technical education, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, innovation, and early college/dual enrollment. We will work across departments and sectors to offer students a personalized pathway experience inclusive of rigorous academic courses and/or work-based learning experiences, and access to quality advising services.



Listed below are the individual district investments that are specifically supporting High Quality Pathways. Please note that these investments are included in the [district appendix](#).

- **Academic Counseling** - Provide K-8 students better guidance and support to lead their own academic recovery efforts through a comprehensive K-8 academic counseling program, with staff in each K-8 school and district support. (Page 51 in [district appendix](#))
- **Naviance to Support My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)** - Extend access to Naviance career planning tool to students in grades 7-8. (Page 54 in [district appendix](#))
- **High School Redesign** - High School Redesign - Better equip secondary students for college and career success by creating a comprehensive Secondary Schools team to develop expanded opportunities for students CTE, AP/IB, and Early College experiences. (Page 52 in [district appendix](#))
- **Credit Recovery** - Enable secondary students to more effectively recover missed credits by redesigning and expanding centralized credit recovery programming. (Page 53 in [district appendix](#))
- **Transition Supports for Newly Created 7-12 Schools** - Enable educators in high schools adding grades 7-8 to prepare for the change through planning, professional development, and community engagement. (Page 54 in [district appendix](#))

FIVE

Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity Investments

We are investing \$23,326,654 to Deliver Equitable Access and Opportunity Investments

Boston Public Schools strives to ensure that every student at each school has a balanced educational experience to explore new areas, pursue their interests, become acquainted with exciting career fields, and develop their talents. Although research shows that Boston's summer learning program significantly boosts achievement for students (McCombs et al., 2014), all students have not accessed these opportunities. In addition, fewer than 15% of high school students meet the CDC's physical activity guidelines. Less than 6% of middle school students and less than 9% of high school students participate in BPS athletics programs. Less than half of high schools meet minimum health education requirements. Finally, BPS Arts Expansion, a partnership among BPS, EdVestors, and a range of community organizations, has significantly increased the number of BPS students receiving weekly arts instruction. BPS has prioritized culturally sustaining arts instruction. From 2014-2019, the percentage of BPS high school students meeting the MassCore arts graduation requirement increased from 52% to 64%.

In addition to providing opportunities to all students to build a strong foundation through inclusionary practices and native literacy through [MassCore](#) (see previous section), we are expanding enrichment opportunities for each student at each school, from exploring engineering and science through a robotics team, to balancing academic work through project based learning curriculums and



AP classes, to expressing art through various activities, to improving student health through physical education and sports, and to strengthening leadership skills through debate clubs, student government, and other student-led extracurricular activities. We are also increasing athletics.

**ESSER
District
Investments
Address
Challenges**

\$23,326,654 in District-wide investments are complementing existing operational funding for Quality Guarantee and are delivering Equitable Access and Opportunity. We are using this opportunity to build on the district's track record of offering summer learning programs that support academic acceleration and enrichment. Since evidence shows that Boston's summer learning program provides a significant achievement boost for students (McCombs et al., 2014), ESSER funds are expanding access to seats in these programs. In response to considerable community concerns regarding access and affordability for learning and enrichment before and after the school day, ESSER funds are enabling us to develop models which expand low- and no-cost extended learning and care options, as well as adding additional seats to current programming in these areas.

Given the importance of physical wellness in the wake of the pandemic and the significant community demand - particularly among students who provided feedback during this process - we are investing in a significant expansion of access to and program quality in physical education, comprehensive health education, and organized athletics. We are also building on the district's previous commitments to arts by investing in arts materials and equipment that are expanding access to quality programming and serving generations of BPS students after ESSER. All schools will have the opportunity to partner with local artists to bring the culture of our communities into student learning.

Part of the strategy to address systemic inequities are to accelerate the district's long-time efforts to diversify our workforce to reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of our community. We are investing in strategies to recruit and cultivate new diverse staff, including school leaders and bilingual educators, as well as to retain those we have in the face of the challenges of the pandemic.

Given the significant racial disparities among student outcomes in all categories, we are taking steps to assess and address inequities in our district systems, practices and resource allocation strategies. We are building our internal capacity to understand these challenges by adding additional staff with specific expertise in planning for equity, who will support district offices as well as schools. We are also specifically investing in the creation of a new school budget model to address the challenges posed by our current Weighted Student Funding formula.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are specifically supporting Equitable Access and Opportunity. Please note that these investments are included in the [district appendix](#).

- **High-Quality Musical Instruments and Capital Arts Equipment** - Address long standing gaps in program quality and course access by providing every school



comprehensive access to new, high quality materials and equipment in music, visual arts, dance, and theater. (Page 26 in [district appendix](#))

- **Cultural Partner Residencies** - Expose students to professional artists and creators based in their community giving every BPS school the opportunity to host a local artist or other cultural partner for an in-school residency. (Page 39 in [district appendix](#))
- **Expanding Athletics Opportunities** - Dramatically expand access to organized sports at the K-8 and secondary levels through additional teams, equipment, coaching staff, and facilities maintenance. (Page 27 in [district appendix](#))
- **Health Education** - Close opportunity and access gaps in health education by expanding high quality health programming to twelve additional schools with grades 6-8. (Page 33 in [district appendix](#))
- **Physical Education**- Improve student well-being by improving program quality and closing access gaps to Physical Education instruction. (Page 31 in [district appendix](#))
- **Recruitment, Cultivation, and Diversity Programs** - Dramatically expand current recruitment, cultivation, and diversity programs to increase the racial and linguistic diversity of educators across roles. (Page 28 in [district appendix](#))
- **Expanded Summer Access** - Expand access to higher quality summer learning and enrichment programs by purchasing additional seats and capacity. (Page 7 in [district appendix](#))
- **Targeted Consultation for C.A.R.E.S: Culturally Linguistically Sustaining Practices, Anti Racism Consciousness, Racial Equity Planning, Equity Roundtables, and Systemic Early Warning Indicator Systems**- Support school and district-office learning in these areas through coaching and professional development. (Page 36 in [district appendix](#))
- **Increasing Staff Capacity to Address COVID** - Address hiring and staffing challenges associated with the pandemic by increasing staff capacity in the Office of Human Capital. (Page 37 in [district appendix](#))
- **Strengthening and Diversifying our Leadership Pipeline** - Increase the number of high quality, diverse school leader applicants through partnerships with three school-leader pipeline programs. (Page 38 in [district appendix](#))
- **Interoperable Data Systems and Dashboards** - Update data systems and dashboards so that we can better use data at the school and district levels to inform decision-making, monitor progress, and provide a coherent picture of the needs and assets of a school or even an individual student. (Page 30 in [district appendix](#))
- **Reimagining the BPS School Budget Allocation Model** - More equitably distribute resources by reimagining the way we allocate funding to schools through the current WSF system, using deep community engagement and extensive review of our current funding models. (Page 32 in [district appendix](#))
- **Supporting Early Career Teacher Practice** - Improve retention of new teachers, who often better represent the diversity of BPS students, by providing early career teachers dedicated coaching. (Page 34 in [district appendix](#))



Engage Families & Community Investments

ESSER District Investments

We are directly funding \$33,054,944 District-wide investments to engage families and strengthen community partnerships.

Boston is fortunate to have a strong partner community that is ready to support our students. Currently, the district has over 850 partner organizations that supplement school-provided support related to academics, social emotional learning, arts, physical health, college access, and family engagement. In addition, nearly 90% of schools partner with behavioral health organizations to meet students' mental health needs (Boston Public Schools, 2019). With recent investments in school social workers focused on anti-racist approaches, schools have added capacity to address students' mental health needs. In addition:

- BPS has committed to a hub school model, which establishes a web of support to connect students and families with resources in the community. Boston's Gardner Pilot Academy serves as a national model of an effective hub school, prioritizing authentic and empowering partnerships with students and families.
- We expanded to 14 Hub Schools.
- The district has also invested in family liaison and social worker roles in each school to strengthen partnerships with families

To expand the district's current existing mental and emotional health supports and other wraparound services, ESSER is funding \$33,054,944 District-wide investments to advance two strategies. First, we will provide schools, students, and families with direct services and resources. This will include increasing student access to counseling services out of school time, better equipping social workers with counseling materials and data systems, building supportive school climates by integrating comprehensive social emotional learning into classrooms, and providing targeted supports such as housing stability resources and mentorship to our highest needs students. In most cases, these investments build on successful existing initiatives, such as the district-wide social work program.

We are using this opportunity to build on the district's track record of offering summer learning programs that support academic acceleration and enrichment. Research shows that Boston's summer learning program provides a significant achievement boost for students (McCombs et al., 2014), and ESSER funds are expanding access to seats in these programs. In response to considerable community concerns regarding access and affordability for learning and enrichment before and after the school day, ESSER funds are enabling us to develop models which expand low- and no-cost extended learning and care options, as well as adding additional seats to current programming in these areas. One of the most critical priorities that arose during both the development of the BPS Strategic Vision and our ESSER Community Engagement efforts was transparency and



communication with families. In addition to significant investments in language and information access through a redesigned website, expanded translation and interpretation services, and consolidated Family Helpline, we are building on the initial successes of school-based Family liaisons to implement a more effective, comprehensive family engagement model.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are specifically supporting Communities and Families by clicking on the select investments listed below. Please note that these investments are included in the [district appendix](#).

- **Before and After School Programs** - Close access gaps for before and after school coverage by developing and scaling new low- and no-cost program models (Page 5 in [district appendix](#))
- **Expanded Summer Access** - Expand access to higher quality summer learning and enrichment programs by purchasing additional seats and capacity. (Page 7 in [district appendix](#))
- **Welcoming and Supportive Schools: Recovery Services and Community Hub School Expansion** - Foster student well-being in all schools through restorative justice programming and expanded social work services, and grow the Community Hub School model to twelve additional schools to better serve those communities. (Page 6 in [district appendix](#))
- **Investing in Opportunity Youth** - Enable academic and social emotional recovery for high needs youth through intensive tutoring and mentoring services, as well as housing stabilization. (Page 8 in [district appendix](#))
- **Social Emotional Learning: Creating Caring Communities** - Support social emotional recovery by providing 60+ schools with coaching, materials, and professional learning to better integrate SEL strategies into each classroom. (Page 10 in [district appendix](#))
- **Translation and Interpretation Services** - Address information access barriers and leverage the assets of the BPS community through additional translation and interpretation equipment, and by training interested, bilingual staff and community members to formally serve as interpreters. A focus of these efforts are to provide better language access options to families of students with disabilities who are not native speakers of English. (Page 48 in [district appendix](#))
- **Information Access: Expanding the Family Helpline and Website** - Empower families to better navigate BPS systems through a multilingual, one-stop family phone helpline and a website redesigned for better community access and information. (Page 12 in [district appendix](#))
- **Building Family Liaison Capacity to Transform School Level Engagement Practice** - Increase the impact of BPS investment in Family engagement in all schools by providing robust development for the Family Liaisons that support each school community. (Page 13 in [district appendix](#))
- **Enrollment and Registration Access for English Learner Families** - Address information and access barriers for English Learner families by targeting additional



information and support for enrollment and registration to these communities. (Page 50 in [district appendix](#))

ESSER School Investments Aligned to District Efforts

The following summary of Communities and Families strategies that ESSER is investing at the school-level are listed below. Please see the [school appendix](#) to learn more about specific schools.

Stronger Partnerships with Families and Community

- Partner with community organizations to build and strengthen our Family and Community Engagement Committee with the goal of transforming our schools to become "Partnership Schools"
- Invest in After School Coordinator to create rich out of school time programming for all learners focused on academic enrichment, SEL and experiential learning.

Enrichment activities and participation in arts programming is correlated with benefits related to tolerance, empathy, and critical thinking.

- Partner with community organizations to reinforce students' skills—communication, empathy for others, and creative problem solving—that are invaluable. We are catalyzing conversations about equity, leadership, and identity in schools.

SEVEN Improve School Environments Investments

We are funding \$55,220,559 in district investments to enhance school environments.

One of the clearest concerns we heard from the community was around the quality of school environments. Families expressed major concerns with air and water quality, with community members highlighting long-standing inequities in access to consistent heating, cooling, and HVAC systems. As a result, we will provide every classroom with indoor air quality monitoring, [the data from which any community member can monitor in real time online](#). We have already established a system to investigate and address air quality issues as they are identified. We are closing the access gap to climate controlled learning environments by ensuring every classroom has air conditioning - be it via central HVAC or individual air conditioning units. [To read more about Facilities plan to assess and improve indoor air quality and ventilation, please click](#)





[here.](#)

In addition, students of color are more likely to attend schools that do not have libraries, science labs, and other critical facilities for learning. We are also using ESSER to begin to address these significant needs for repairs and deferred maintenance. As community members have repeatedly highlighted, not all schools face the same level of need. We are investing in a building quality assessment that will not only guide the immediate deployment of ESSER funds to address repair needs, but will inform long term capital and maintenance planning.

While even dedicating all \$400 million of ESSER would not be sufficient to make every repair and capital improvement that our students deserve, we are starting with ensuring each classroom in each school has good indoor quality and continue to tackle each issue in the coming years. Every single school deserves a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, accessible, flexible, learner-centered, and developmentally-and age-appropriate, and ESSER is a critical step toward this goal.

Listed below are the individual district investments that are specifically supporting enhancing School Environments. Please note that these investments are included in the [district appendix](#).

- **Healthy and Safe School Facilities** - Re-assess school building needs in the context of COVID safety, grow the facilities team to more quickly respond to school needs, and invest in high priority repairs and maintenance. (Page 56 in [district appendix](#))
- **Clean Water Access** - Improve water access at school buildings by returning drinking fountains to service and acquiring portable sinks. (Page 59 in [district appendix](#))
- **Returning to Healthy and Supportive Schools** - Ensure a safer student and staff return to in person learning through expansion of nursing staff and COVID contact tracing. (Page 57 in [district appendix](#))
- **Air Quality and Air Conditioning Investments** - Improve air quality in every school through air filtration, air quality monitoring, and access to air conditioning. (Page 56 in [district appendix](#))
- **School Cleaning, PPE, and Expanded COVID-19 Mitigation Measures** - Continuously support COVID safety through PPE, cleaning, and creative solutions such as outdoor dining tents. (Page 58 in [district appendix](#))
- **Outdoor Teaching and Learning in Science**- Deepen science learning experiences by creating over 60 new outdoor learning spaces and providing students across schools with expanded access to trips to nature and science sites. (Page 22 in [district appendix](#))

NEXT STEPS

Implementation

Schools and districts have submitted their plans for ESSER investments during fall 2021-winter 2021. Now, schools and district departments are receiving the ESSER funds and beginning the work of executing the plans they have proposed. Schools have developed Quality School Plans and districts have drafted work plans in order to operationalize how they will implement their investments. All school and district plans have designated measures where we expect to see student, school, and district impact.



The [Rennie Center's report](#) that we commissioned helped the district focus on key leverage points to address using ESSER dollars, and to later sustain over the long term in our regular operational budget. The Accountability Division has [identified evidenced-based practices](#), which have been made available to our schools and district teams. Taking the time to carefully consider what will lead to the most impact for our students is a key step in the long-term impact of these federal dollars. Criteria from [AASA](#) and cross-city collaboration from the Wallace Foundation also informed our approach to implementation. It provides a self-assessment of four principles we will use to examine the impact of ESSER funding and make changes along the way in response to what is working most effectively and equitably. The first principle is to plant seeds for long lasting change in the district that will help us achieve our long term vision. The second is to center equity in planning and implementation. The third is to use, build, and share knowledge including leveraging research and evidence of impact in our BPS schools with our students. The fourth is to sustain strategically through ongoing funding, partnerships, and added capacity that will remain after the ESSER II and III expire.

Impact

Success will be measured using the indicators that have been specified in each school and district strategic plan. Each investment has at least one defined impact measure where we expect to see change due to the new practice, intervention, or support. The impact measures are both quantitative and qualitative and as closely linked to the investment as possible. In many cases, these impact measures are directly tied to the Strategic Vision. Capturing data and reflecting on what is working and not working about our investments will guide us to continuously learn and course-correct as needed to ensure the maximum positive benefit for our students. Please see the district and school appendices to see the specific measures tied to each plan.

Big picture, BPS plans to track impact on metrics where we know the pandemic had a negative effect. We will monitor progress in the coming years as the investments across all categories are implemented and the effects increase over time. Reports will be made to share the impacts of ESSER investments. In line with our commitment to equity, data will be disaggregated by focus student groups and, as is relevant, additional identified special populations.

We will continue to partner and deepen relationships with students, families, and communities of color to make sure our work to advance racial equity is effective and sustainable for the long-haul. The BPS team will continue to engage our community, allowing families and students to reflect and provide feedback about how their experience of Boston Public Schools has been supported by these critical ESSER investments.

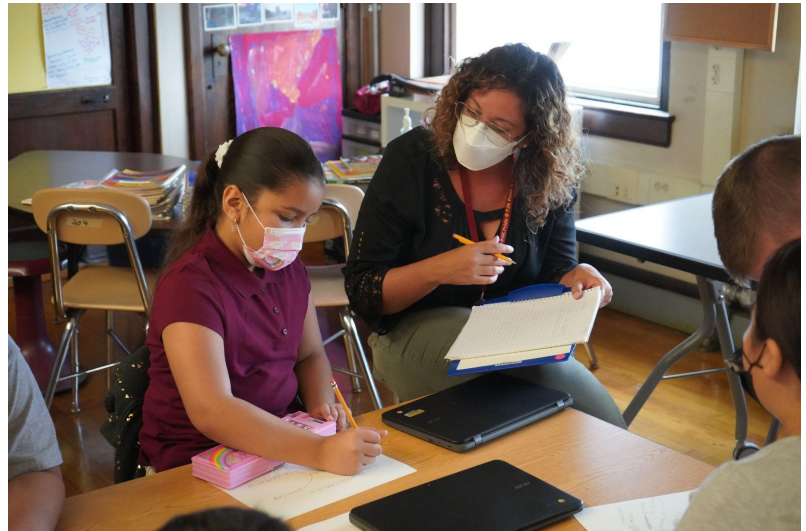
Monitor for Mid-Course Correction and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring the effectiveness of this plan to meet student and school needs is embedded in our strategy. We will review this plan and revise as necessary, based on data, feedback, changes in circumstances, and CDC guidance. **We will report to the community every 6 months through the end of the ESSER III grant.** Stay up to date at: bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21



Planning for evidence-based interventions and setting measurable goals are key inputs for our work. In order to hold the district accountable to these ambitious goals, BPS is putting an internal team in place that will be specifically focused on ensuring effective project execution across the myriad ESSER investments. To monitor follow-through and delivery of ESSER investments, ESSER district proposals are tied to work plans and ESSER school proposals are tied to School Improvement Plans that track implementation progress. Implementation is reviewed quarterly through the Accountability's Division in partnership with the Division of Strategy and Equity and School Superintendents.

We have established a supportive evidence-base as the foundation, designed a rigorous review process, set expectations for concrete work plans/school improvement plans with progress metrics, and have identified clear outcomes as we monitor and report to the public. This Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle is central to our overall effectiveness as a leading and learning organization. In addition, Equity Roundtables and School Site Council meetings will be two core structures for continued conversation and monitoring of ESSER investment implementation.



Continued engagement with stakeholders will be critical to overcome barriers and course-correct as plans are put into practice and we learn from initial implementation. The Office of Accountability and Finance Divisions will provide updates on ESSER investments, and the ESSER Implementation team will be closely monitoring the rollout of district and school investments and assessing progress toward targets.

Evaluation

The ESSER and Research teams connected with several researchers, institutions of higher education, and research and evaluation organizations to best understand the current state of education in BPS as well as the best path forward. Evaluation of ESSER will include different tiers of support from internal and external researchers and evaluation experts, so that all schools and district offices with ESSER investments receive a baseline on support for implementing evidence based programming. The universal supports available include:

- [Internal Research Website](#): BPS-specific research resources including 1-pagers, literature briefs, practice guides, and tools/protocols
- [Table of Evidence Dashboard](#): co-developed by The Regional Education Lab at the Education Development Center and Research Team and includes evidence-based research aligned to the 6 focus areas of ESSER
- [Logic Model supports](#) including a brief that outlines the purpose, importance, and basic components of logic models and a template allows teams to create logic models to be used for implementation and evaluation



- [Research-Based Impactful Practice One-Pagers](#): co-developed by The Regional Education Lab at the Education Development Center and Research Team and represents four one-pagers covering the areas of tutoring, SEL, Mental Health, and Professional Development
- Current ESSER-funding guidance from reputable research organizations

For a subset of District initiatives that represent significant investment, departments will receive team-wide Logic Model training, which includes an introduction to logic models and direct support in drafting and reviewing the team-specific logic model for the ESSER investment. These initiatives will also build connections with external evaluators to conduct implementation and impact evaluations for central departments.

We are in the process of making final determinations of the key questions for evaluation in partnership with our community stakeholders.

- Prioritizing district investments that could make an impact with temporary programming. For example, offering students on-demand tutoring in any subject to assist with academic recovery.
- Identifying one-time costs that could make an impact on students' experience far beyond the life of ESSER. For example, we are reinvesting in music and arts equipment that will last 10 years or more.
- Structuring investments to minimize personnel and use existing staff wherever possible to minimize shifts in staffing levels. For example, we are developing and providing stipends to existing staff members to champion restorative justice programming in schools.
- Pairing investments with complimentary investments that would be sustained on the annual BPS Operational budget. For example, investing in new library collections and information sciences technology in ESSER while the district adds new librarians.
- Placing immediate costs on ESSER with a plan to transition those costs onto the annual BPS Operational budget. For example, we are using ESSER to hire key members of the Facilities department to begin building improvements months before they will be supported by the BPS Operational budget.
- Creating an evaluation strategy to help us understand which district initiatives have been implemented most successful so that we can prioritize sustaining the most impactful work after ESSER

Aligned partnerships is part of our sustainability strategy, though still a work in progress as the district recalibrates its focus to deliver on the BPS Return, Recover and Reimagine promise and our ESSER Commitments. Establishing aligned partnerships to expand district capacity to deliver is one of our next steps.



Updates and Additional Investments

BPS wants our community members to be informed and confident in how we invest these one-time federal relief funds and continue to shape how we best use ESSER Funding to support our students. As outlined in the Strategy and Equity Planning subsection outlining the plans for Implementation & Accountability, district and school teams will be working on implementation of investments and monitoring progress. The ESSER team will be providing updates to share implementation progress and initial impact measurement information, when available. We will post new information every 6 months on the website. Stay up to date at: bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21

Beginning in Summer 2022, we will plan for the launch of Cross-School Innovation and Community Investment funding, which will have more specific purposes than the School Plan and District-wide investments. These funds will support programming through summer 2024. Below are possible approaches to each category that will be refined in the coming months with additional feedback.

Cross-School Innovation

Cross-School Innovation investments may be proposed by either school-based staff or Central Office team members, for programs that will serve and benefit multiple BPS schools but not necessarily reach all schools. In addition to prioritizing investments that seek to benefit groups of students who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and/or will address the impacts of the pandemic directly, we propose to fund programs that:

- **Have the potential to scale across all schools at BPS:** Innovation investment must be approaches that are not already widely practiced but have the potential to scale up to benefit many schools. Learning from these investments should benefit others who are facing similar challenges in different settings.
- **Can improve upon alternative solutions:** We will prioritize innovation investments that are not just business as usual. Have a new approach which brings benefits to student outcomes and is not already widely used? We will prioritize the Innovations which have the strongest rationale for their approach and can be more viable, more impactful or more cost effective than existing solutions.
- **Are backed by evidence of potential impact:** We expect that innovations we fund to be informed by evidence of what works. This evidence might focus on the students' outcomes, or 'how-to' evidence on how your solution can be implemented or scaled successfully.

Community Investments

These investments will have a specific focus on creating the conditions for effective relationships and partnerships among students, schools, families, and the community. These may include investments that go beyond existing school-based and district-wide investments to improve school climate, provide family support services, and foster restorative practices. Many of these investments may involve partnerships between the district and community-based organizations.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact of ESSER investments across our district this school year and into the future. We are eager for the continued engagement of our BPS community.



APPENDICES





School-Directed Investments

Details on each school’s plan for using ESSER funds can be found in the [ESSER Plan Schools Appendix](#).

Each school’s ESSER investment proposal summary includes:

- School Name
- Year 1 ESSER Investment Allocation
- If the plan has been approved by the school community stakeholders:
 - Approved by School Superintendent
 - Informed by School-Based Equity Round Table
 - Approved by the School Site Council or Governing Board
 - Engaged with by the Instructional Leadership Team
- 1-3 School Priorities
 - Alignment of each priority to either Academics, Social Emotional, Operations, or Academics & Social Emotional
 - ESSER Focus Area Alignment (optional)
 - Description of each priority
- How the Plan Addresses the Needs of Struggling Students, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Other Students Disproportionately Impacted by the Pandemic
- Progress Measures
 - Desired Long Term Impact: Over the long term, what is the school seeking to improve?
 - Progress Measurement: What measures will provide evidence of progress/impact on the school's priorities for 2021-2022?
 - School Community Updates: How do you plan to keep staff, teachers, students, and others in your school updated about the need for the investments and its progress/impact of your school plan and ESSER investments?

School Name		
\$INVESTMENT Year 1 Allocation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan approved by School Superintendent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan informed by School-Based Equity Round Table <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan approved by the School Site Council or Governing Board <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan engaged with by the Instructional Leadership Team	
School Priorities		
Priority 1 Name	Priority 2 Name	Priority 3 Name
Text	Text	Text
How the Plan Addresses the Needs of Struggling Students, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Other Students Disproportionately Impacted by the Pandemic		
Text		
Progress Measures		
Desired Long Term Impact	Progress Measurement	School Community Updates
• Text	• Text	• Text



District-Wide Investments

Centrally-deployed, District-Wide Investments advance strategies in multiple ESSER Focus Areas and are part of the district’s efforts to implement multiple Goals from the [Strategic Plan](#). The table below summarizes district investments based on the primary Focus of the investment. As with the figures above, dollar amounts reflect anticipated three year spending in a given area, some of which will be funded on ESSER II and III respectively.

Focus	Anticipated 3 Year Total
Strengthen Core Instruction	\$43,157,549
Ensure Inclusion	\$17,104,615
Accelerate Multilingual Learning	\$19,017,725
Create High Quality Pathways	\$16,551,600
Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity	\$23,326,654
Engage Families & Community	\$33,054,944
Improve School Environments	\$55,220,559
Total	\$207,424,645

Details on each centrally deployed district-wide ESSER investment can be found in the [ESSER Plan District-Wide Investment Appendix](#). The District-Wide Appendix is organized using tables like the one below. Note that a single table like the one below may include multiple components that appear in different strategies in the summary above.

Investment Title		
\$\$ Anticipated 3-year spending on this investment	ESSER Focus Area Which ESSER Focus Areas does this investment advance?	Strategic Plan Alignment What are the primary Strategic Plan Goals that this advances?
Vision What will this investment seek to do over the course of three years? Why is that necessary? In some cases, ESSER funding is part of providing a program that will use other district funds, as well.		
Target Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kinds of indicators and outcomes is this investment designed to improve? 		
Key Investments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What specifically will be paid for by ESSER? 	Community Feedback & Contributing Stakeholders How does this investment reflect feedback from stakeholders and community members? What kinds of stakeholders informed its development?	
DESE Evidence-Based Strategies The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that districts identify at least 20% of their ESSER III funding as investment in strategies from a list the state has provided of Evidence-based Recovery strategies. If this box is included, the language reflects the list provided by DESE.		



Community Engagement

Many stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the ESSER process and proposals. This appendix outlines the specific engagement opportunities related to ESSER development.

ESSER Commission

The ESSER Commission was created in order to elevate the voices of representatives from key stakeholder groups across the district. This group of thirty-three established community members met biweekly or weekly in May, June, and July to discuss proposals about the creation of the ESSER plans. These leaders reflect the rich diversity of our BPS community: representing students, parents/families, community partner organizations, City of Boston staff, BPS Task Forces, higher education partners, BPS principals, the Private Industry Council (PIC), philanthropic partners, the School Committee, faith-based partners, the Boston Teachers Union (BTU), and the business community. All these stakeholders share a fierce commitment to equity and the students of Boston Public Schools.

Meetings were held virtually via Zoom and open to members of the public to observe. Following each meeting, there was an opportunity for public comment. The meeting materials (slides and/or recordings) are posted on the [BPS ESSER Commission website page](#).

ESSER Commission Meetings

- Thursday, May 13, 5:00 pm - Feedback on guardrails framework
- Thursday, May 27, 5:00 pm - Deeper feedback on guardrails: allotments & focus areas
- Thursday, June 10, 5:00 pm - Elevating collective voice and providing written feedback on refined proposals for guardrail 3 (allotments)
- Thursday, June 24, 5:00 pm - Feedback on proposed models for school allotments
- Thursday, July 1, 5:00 pm - Feedback on central office investment strategy
- Thursday, July 8, 5:00 pm - Feedback on the ESSER plan and proposed district-wide investments

A complete list of ESSER Commission Members is below. We have deep gratitude for the time and expertise of our ESSER Commission members. Their perspectives and rich feedback was pivotal to forming the best possible plan for spending ESSER funds. We have invited this group to continue to engage with us in the future of the ESSER work.

- **Sam Acevedo:** Executive Director, Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC); Co-Chair, BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force; Member, Greater Boston Latinos Network (GLBN);
- **Celina Barrios-Millner:** Director of Equity and Inclusion, Economic Development Office, City of Boston
- **Josie Colon:** Student, New Mission High School; Member, Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)
- **Rahn Dorsey:** Chair, Board of Trustees, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT); Former Chief of Education, City of Boston
- **Pam Eddinger:** President, Bunker Hill Community College
- **Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal:** Executive Director, Lawyers for Civil Rights



- **Theresa Garcia de Quevedo**: Educator and Language Acquisition Team Facilitator (LATF), Mildred Ave School
- **Roxann Harvey**: Chair of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC)
- **John Jackson**: President and CEO, Schott Foundation for Public Education
- **Karla Jenkins**: Principal, Higginson Inclusion School (K0-2)
- **Suzanne Lee**: Co-Chair, English Language Learner (ELL) Task Force
- **Margaret McKenna**: Chairwoman, Human Rights Commission, City of Boston
- **Xyra Mercer**: Student, Henderson K-12 Inclusion School; Member, Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)
- **Keith Motley**: Consultant President/CEO, Urban League Massachusetts; Former Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston (UMASS)
- **Lee Pelton**: President and CEO, The Boston Foundation; Former President, Emerson College
- **Paul Reville**: Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- **Ruby Reyes**: Director, Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA)
- **Nicol Riley**: Assistant Diversity and Inclusion Co-Chair, Citywide Parent Council (CPC) of the Boston Public Schools
- **Valerie Roberson**: President, Roxbury Community College
- **Jeri Robinson**: Chair, BPS School Committee
- **Jim Rooney**: President and CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
- **Ayele Shakur**: CEO, BUILD; Co-Chair, BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force
- **Chris Smith**: President and Executive Director, Boston After School and Beyond
- **Marcelo Suarez-Orozco**: Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston (UMASS)
- **Tanisha Sullivan**: Former President, Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- **Neil Sullivan**: Executive Director, Private Industry Council (PIC)
- **Jessica Tang**: President, Boston Teachers Union
- **Pastor Matt K Thompson**: Pastor, Jubilee Church Boston
- **Dania Vazquez**: Head of School, Margarita Muniz Academy
- **Grace Wai**: BPS School Superintendent & Executive Team Member
- **Lili Wu**: Member, BPS District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)



Engagement with Students

Students are at the center of all the work we do as a district. In every conversation about ESSER funding, the BPS team maintains a sharp focus on the impact that these dollars will have for students and what outcomes will be improved for them as a result of ESSER investments. Every dollar spent using ESSER funds must be to support stronger student outcomes. We invited students to the table as active participants in the discussion about how this funding can be most impactful to their experience of school.

To date, we have engaged the Boston Student Advisory Committee (BSAC) and the Superintendent's Student Cabinet in several meetings to provide feedback and share their views on ESSER priorities. BSAC includes a representative from every school and provides insight into the perspectives of students across our varied secondary school settings. The Superintendent's Cabinet provided insight and feedback on policy and practices at the district level. The feedback from these established student groups helped set the strategy for ESSER investments. There were also two student representatives on the ESSER Commission.

Student ESSER Commission

The mission of the Return, Recover & Reimagine Student Commission met four times to provide recommendations on how they envision ESSER funds being used across the district, specifically in school buildings and throughout the community. Student Commission members were agents of change, amplifying the voices of all Boston Public School Students. These student voices were an important anchor to cement ESSER II and ESSER III investments.

The dates of the Student ESSER Commission meetings were:

- Thursday, July 29 (5:00pm - 6:30pm)
- Thursday, August 5 (5:00pm - 6:30pm)
- Thursday, August 12 (5:00pm - 6:30pm)
- Thursday, August 19 (5:00pm - 6:30pm)

[To review meeting slides and notes, please visit our BPS Student Commission Webpage.](#)





Community Engagement Meetings

The BPS community has been invited to participate in many sessions to make space for voices from every part of our community. Meeting materials (slides and/or recordings) are posted on the [BPS Community Engagement website page](#). In addition to these open community meetings, there have been dozens of feedback meetings with stakeholders from across the BPS community. The BPS ESSER team has also reviewed hundreds of emails and submitted written feedback from across the city. We have heard from more than 1,200 stakeholders across these engagements. All these perspectives have influenced and strengthened our proposals for ESSER spending and helped our work stay focused on student outcomes.

Community Meetings

- May 13, 2021 - English Learner Task Force*
- May 17, 2021 - District English Learner Advisory Committee, 27 Attendees
- May 21, 2021 - Superintendent’s Executive Student Cabinet, 10 Attendees
- May 24, 2021 - Superintendent Quarterly Parent Leaders Meeting, 56 Attendees
- May 26, 2021 - Parent Group Meeting, 99 Attendees
- May 26, 2021 - District Wellness Task Force*
- June 3, 2021 - Parent Group Meeting including the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC), District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC), and City-Wide Parent Council (CPC), 277 Attendees
- June 14, 2021- Boston Teachers Union Meeting, 15 Attendees
- June 15, 2021 - Public Community Meeting, 177 Attendees
- June 17, 2021 - Community Engagement and Advisory Council, 8 Attendees
- June 23, 2021 - Public Community Meeting, 45 Attendees
- June 24, 2021 - BPS Partners Meeting, 55 Attendees
- June 29, 2021 - Opportunity Gaps Task Force*
- June 29, 2021 - Public Community Meeting, 150 Attendees
- July 6, 2021 - Public Community Meeting, 10 Attendees

*Please note that Task Forces are called for by the School Committee and their gatherings are subject to Open Meeting law; therefore, a specific number of attendees is not reported below.

1200+
Stakeholders



Themes from Community Engagement

Here are a subset of themes and specific feedback from across different kinds of engagements. This input deepened our understanding of the needs and priorities of the community, and informed key district investments to address those needs.

Strengthen Core Instruction:

- Increase access to rigorous content across grades K-12.
- Hire additional short-term staff for tutoring or providing individual services
- Provide additional time for learning outside the traditional school day and year
- Learning must be inclusive of subjects like Science, Library and Information Science, Physical Education, Health Education, etc.
- Measure student academic performance using high-quality benchmark assessments and differentiate instruction so students get the support they need
- Those closest to students will understand their academic needs, and schools must be able to directly access resources to address those needs



Ensure Inclusion: To ensure inclusion and quality supports for students with disabilities, we are funding a multi-year strategy to build inclusion classrooms within BPS, and will identify and address root causes of disproportionality.

- Provide professional development for staff to better support students generally and specifically in inclusive settings
- Expand the number of options and programs for students with disabilities to learn in inclusive environments
- Ensure students with disabilities can access programs such as music, athletics, and multilingual learning
- Provide additional academic and social emotional support for students in special education settings through things like smaller class sizes, additional support or teaching staff, and personalized instruction or mentoring
- Ensure all compensatory services are delivered to students who are owed supports from the 2020-2021 school year

Accelerate Multilingual Learning: To accelerate multilingual learning and provide better experiences for English Learners, we are providing students with immediate access to interventions and supports, while making long term investments in learning experiences that celebrate and support linguistic diversity.

- Increase the number of teachers and staff members who have language proficiency in a second language
- Provide better support and materials for dual language programs, and expand access to these programs



- Improve communications and increase parent/families access through translated materials and intentional engagement with families who have a non-English home language. This access is critical not only to school information, but also to provide authentic access to before and after school care, summer programs, and partner program opportunities.
- Increase access to before and after school care that is tailored for English Learners, and do the same for programming outside the school year

Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity: To deliver more equitable access and opportunity for students, we are addressing both how our central office can more equitably support communities and distribute resources and dramatically expand access to arts, athletics, and out of school enrichment.

- Using a need-based formula to allocate the funds to schools is critical. This should drive both ESSER allocations and address the ways our current funding formulas are not sufficient
- Educators must be culturally responsive and better reflect the cultural and particularly linguistic diversity of students
- Racial disparities must be explicitly stated and addressed at a policy level to address the disparate impact of the pandemic; one tool that should be expanded is the Racial Equity Planning Tool
- All students should have access to Physical Education, Health Education, and Athletics, and physical activity and well being is even more crucial in the wake of the pandemic. The need for comprehensive and effective health education was a particular priority among students.
- Address disparities in access to music, arts, and sciences
- Enrichment should be offered during the school day and beyond, and ensuring access and affordability is imperative

"As schools look toward recovery from the pandemic, promoting high-quality, equitable opportunities for physical activity should be a top priority to support BPS's goal of providing exceptional, equitable, and joyful educational opportunities. "

- Daniel Hatfield, Boston resident, affiliated with the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Engage Communities & Families: To more authentically engage communities and families, we are redesigning the ways families will receive information and expanding the social emotional and mental health supports students receive.

- Effective communication with families is paramount. The district and schools must be clear and distribute that information out with sufficient time to engage community partners and stakeholders in an authentic way.
- Families that are struggling need direct supports and resources wherever possible
- There are persistent language barriers in communication to and engagements for families that need to be addressed
- Students urgently need direct social emotional and mental health services, in and outside of school
- Students should have access to social emotional learning as part of a well rounded curriculum and to



address the impacts of the pandemic

- Community partners can provide valuable supports to students in and out of school, and the district should enlist their services

"Many parents had to become educators during the pandemic, so let's treat them as partners and incentivize them to be partners with the district. "

- Community Engagement Advisory Council member

Improve School Environments: To improve the school environments that our children learn in every day, we are making unprecedented investments in clean air and water, addressing Covid health and safety concerns, and are setting up long term improvements to how we maintain our buildings.

- Funds should be used to improve the physical buildings and outdoor spaces where our students spend their time. The needs range from repairing windows and leaks to renovating bathrooms and reopening closed library and gymnasium spaces.
- Not all Schools face the same level of need in facilities and maintenance and investments should focus on addressing inequities.
- A major inequity that needs to be addressed are the heating, cooling and HVAC systems
- Air and water quality must be a top priority to make buildings safe for students to return
- Improve usability of outdoor spaces for learning and activities.

"Decades of deferred maintenance are not the fault of our current leadership, but current leadership is in a position to solve the problem they inherited.

We need beautiful comprehensive secondary buildings with athletic facilities, libraries, media centers, art rooms, photography and video production, science labs, outdoor learning spaces. We need early ed and elementary buildings that are designed for their unique needs, like bathrooms in kindergarten classrooms, sinks, art rooms, outdoor learning spaces.

All buildings must have appropriate, functioning climate control and portable running hot and cold water. That baseline alone could take all the ESSER funding, and it would be money well spent. We have to be ready for a changing climate and the next pandemic. "

- Parent, Online Forum



Educator Feedback: WikiWisdom Report

Following a year of living through the COVID-19 pandemic and its upending of much of what school has looked like, leaders of Boston Public Schools and Boston Teachers Union reached out to their staff/members to gain insight into how the district might best reimagine its schools moving forward.

Based on your experience with BPS, and especially this past year, we are looking for your ideas to reimagining what school could be. If there were no bounds, what would the ideal learning experience be like for our students?

In response, 201 members of the BPS education community joined a unique online conversation, the Boston Public Schools WikiWisdom Forum, between February 25, 2021 and March 2, 2021, and posted 113 ideas, 179 comments engaging with the question: Based on your experience with BPS, and especially this past year, we are looking for your ideas to reimagining what school could be. If there were no bounds, what would the ideal learning experience be like for our students?

Ten of the most highly engaged members of this forum accepted an invitation to join Phase II of the project as BPS Thought Leaders. Building on the online conversation, the ten Thought

Leaders honed the posted ideas and developed seven recommendations and forty proposed solutions included in a report, which they presented to BPS and BTU Leadership on May 3, 2021.

The seven recommendations, which each have proposed solutions, were:

1. Make facility improvements, building updates, and maintenance a priority.
2. Increase school support staff, especially post-COVID.
3. Explore ways to continue to engage with families and students remotely and leverage technology in the classroom.
4. Expand access to resources throughout the district.
5. Rethink assessment and grading models, and provide curriculum consistency.
6. Improve diversity and representation in BPS.
7. Solicit and incorporate more feedback from stakeholders throughout the year.

The full report, [Re-imagining Boston Public Schools: A WikiWisdom Report](#), can be viewed on the BPS website.

Family Needs Survey

In spring 2021, BPS wanted to gather feedback from families about their experience during the pandemic school year to inform the supports we put in place for the upcoming year. The survey of BPS families asked questions about Family-School Communication, Cultural Awareness and Action, Overall Perceptions of School, and School Outreach. Students and teachers were also surveyed about academic and school climate/culture. The survey launched 5/24/2021, administered via Panorama in 10 languages, and closed on 6/18/2021. Families received the survey via emails, texts, and on the BPS website. Brandeis University is performing an analysis of the qualitative data, which is expected in mid-July.

One survey question asked, “How concerned are you with your child’s (Academic, Social-Emotional,



Behavioral, Physical Health, Peer Relationships, Relationships with Adults) right now?" Overall, 28% of families on average indicated they were Somewhat concerned, Quite concerned, or Extremely concerned about their child.

Family Survey: % Concerned Parents/Families by Race/Ethnicity

Overall, 28% of families on average indicated they were Somewhat concerned, Quite concerned, or Extremely concerned about their child.			
Asian	Black	Latinx	White
41%	29%	24%	26%

Family Survey: Student Needs (% Somewhat/Quite/ Extremely Concerned) by Race/Ethnicity

	Academic Growth	Social-Emotional Well-being	Peer Relationships	Behavior	Physical Health	Relationships with Adults
Overall	41%	38%	25%	24%	22%	18%
Asian	52%	49%	37%	38%	38%	33%
Black	44%	37%	26%	25%	22%	19%
Latinx	37%	32%	19%	22%	22%	14%
White	38%	40%	27%	21%	16%	13%

This data reflects 11,987 responses, representing 26% of BPS families. White families responded at higher rates, but the vast majority of survey responses are from non-white respondents (79% of responses). Substantially more non-English speaking families completed this spring survey, increasing from 20% of respondents in the fall to 31% in the spring.



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