



# RETURN RECOVER REIMAGINE:

3-Year Plan for  
Greater Equity  
and Recovery

ESSER 2021-2024

February 2023



## To the Boston Public Schools Community,

It is with a sense of appreciation, optimism, and gratitude that I present you with this spending and progress monitoring update for our 3-Year Plan for greater equity and recovery following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding is one of the tools provided by the federal government to address the long-standing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. Boston Public Schools (BPS) received three allotments of funds, totalling \$431 million: a critical investment in our work to accelerate learning and recovery, support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff, and address historic and new challenges in our school buildings. Our approach 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. The budgeting and the spending of those dollars are a statement of our values. We have all heard this before, but I truly believe it. The ESSER funding has given us a unique opportunity to invest and spend in critical need areas that have stabilized and strengthened our ability to serve students and families over the past 3 years.

In this report, you will read about the progress of the overall spending of ESSER and the progress of the seven priorities we heard from the community in July 2021. Those priorities have a lot of overlap with what we as a district have prioritized for the Fiscal Year 2024:

- 1) Strengthening Core Instruction through Equitable Literacy
- 2) Ensuring Inclusion
- 3) Accelerating Multilingual Learning
- 4) Creating High Quality Career and Early College Pathways
- 5) Delivering Equitable Access and Opportunity
- 6) Engaging Families and Community
- 7) Improving School Environment.

To meet the needs of our students and create a fully inclusive, high-performing district for all students, we are focusing solely on the work that is making a difference for children and ensuring that each dollar benefits student learning.

BPS is incredibly fortunate to have the continued support of Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston School Committee. The Mayor's message was clear: to build a better future, we must ensure our students have access to quality learning opportunities every day. We know that improving access and quality will take major investments, and with Mayor Wu's commitment to build inclusive school communities, all students will have the resources they need to succeed. We are set to begin a new era of partnership with the Boston Teachers Union and our other unions that will ensure every classroom in BPS is inclusive for all students. In addition, with Mayor Wu's commitment to a \$2 billion investment, we have the capital resources to launch a new era of school-building projections with the Green New Deal for BPS. We are working toward expanding access to safe, healthy, energy-efficient, inspiring learning spaces with state-of-the-art classrooms, cafeterias, auditoriums, and athletic, outdoor, meeting, and support spaces.

BPS has two sustainability challenges facing schools: ESSER funding coming to an end and managing the general funds allocated to hold schools harmless from enrollment declines for the last two fiscal years. As part of our short-term sustainability plans, we must begin (1) transitioning critical school-based investments (in inclusive education, multilingual learner program expansion, equitable literacy, high school redesign, or social-emotional support) from ESSER onto the general fund while (2) balancing the need to fully spend down ESSER by shifting hold-harmless support from the general fund to ESSER. This approach means that schools will not be required to make cuts to services or support to students in Fiscal Year '24 (school year 2022-2023).



We know we can't go back to the way we used to do things. The pandemic changed everything, and we need to be even more focused on the needs of individual students, especially for our Black and Brown students, Special Education students, and Multilingual learners. This will require us to be nimble, to add more support for our most vulnerable students, and to measure their progress so we can provide every resource they need to succeed. Therefore, we are not proposing a reduction in the hold-harmless funding; instead, we are proposing a change to the funding source. We will continue to maintain and increase community transparency around ESSER funds and align with student outcomes.

As part of our long-term sustainability approach:

1. We will reinvest funds from empty seats in classrooms. As you'll read later in this report: the last two years BPS has been monitoring how much of recent enrollment declines were temporary and pandemic-related. This year, enrollment declined by less than projected - showing that this approach was at least partially warranted. Despite that, we are still anticipating continued enrollment declines in future years due to current demographic trends, as we have seen in other urban centers regarding the overall decrease in school-aged children and smaller entry-grade cohorts. In the next few fiscal years, schools will not be able to rely on our hold harmless policy to maintain extra capacity. We need to confront our district's changing realities and shift resources in ways that meet student needs and accelerate improvement. This means that we will need to reconsider the number of empty seats in classrooms we have held harmless for the last two years and consider how those resources can be used to create equitable learning opportunities for all students.
2. We have launched two system transformational initiatives as part of our long-term sustainability strategy - the [Green New Deal](#) and the [Reimagine School Funding project](#) - which will start to have a fiscal impact in FY25.

In collaboration with my team and our school leaders we're building a sustainable budget and plan that meets the needs of our students at this moment and lays a foundation for us to build on our priority areas. As we take on long-needed and critical changes in literacy, inclusion, and multilingual and secondary education, we are determined to deliver on our promise of educational equity and excellence.

There is a lot of work to do, and ESSER has given us the opportunity to recover from the pandemic while investing in our work together to ensure every child, in every classroom, and in every school has the same opportunity to succeed. I am excited to be here and am grateful for this opportunity to serve BPS and our students.

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](#).

In partnership,

Mary Skipper  
Superintendent, Boston Public Schools



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# ESSER OVERVIEW AND SPENDING

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.

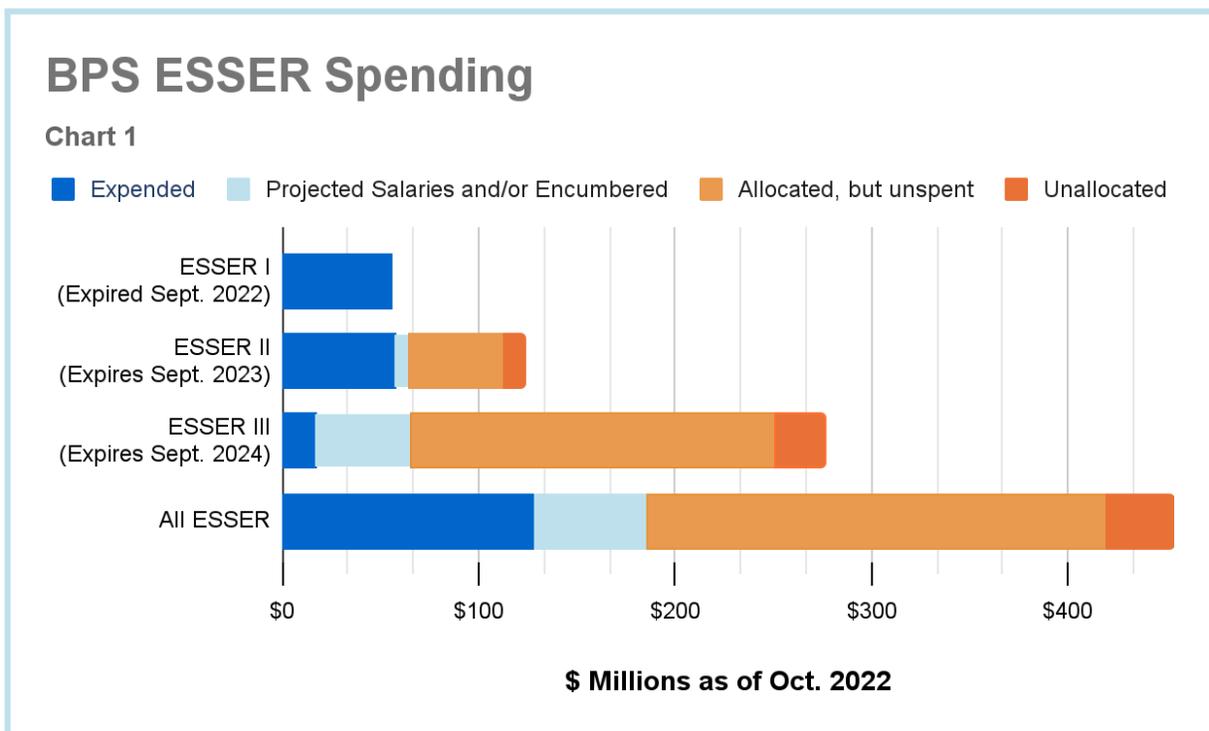
|                   | ESSER I        | ESSER I - City of Boston Additional Allocation | ESSER II       | ESSER III      |
|-------------------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Act Name          | CARES Act      | CARES Act                                      | CRRSA Act      | ARP Act        |
| BPS Allocation    | \$32 million   | \$23 million                                   | \$123 million  | \$276 million  |
| Deadline to Spend | September 2022 | September 2022                                 | September 2023 | September 2024 |

As demonstrated on BPS Spending Chart 1 on the next page, we have spent a total 41% (\$186M) of ESSER funding as of October 2022. This total includes encumbered amounts and projected salaries on ESSER.

- **BPS swiftly allocated and spent 100% (\$55M) of ESSER I** funds to immediately respond to support our students through the early stages of the pandemic. The district received strong input from schools and consultation from the community, funds were spent 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 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other sources, so that our general operating budget could continue to fund our pre-pandemic priorities.
- **As of October 2022, BPS has spent 52% (\$65M) of ESSER II funds dollars and 24% (\$66M) of ESSER III funds.** This amount included encumbered and projected salaries. Encumbered refers to the external contracts hired but work isn't yet complete. It is important to note that since externally contracted work that has been hired before the deadline, extra time is provided after the ESSER II and III deadlines to pay contractors. Next, in calculating the projected salaries, we accounted for filled positions as of Oct. 2022 and did not include budgeted amounts for unfilled positions. We are



continuously monitoring this expense so that we are able to reallocate unspent funds due to salary savings. Additionally, BPS has about \$233M allocated but unspent. The Allocation and Implementation sections in this reporter detail what ESSER is funding and provides updates on the progress of spending. To ensure BPS is adequately monitoring spending by the relevant deadlines, BPS has implemented various checks and balances. First, the district has divided the ESSER II and III investments into three annual budgets to ensure it can track how it is spending against how it planned to spend the funds. Secondly, one of the district’s spending strategies is to spend down ESSER II first and then spend down ESSER III since it has an additional year to spend down ESSER III. Finally, BPS is reallocating funds that are underspent in ways that are aligned to its major priorities (such as Equitable Literacy, Inclusion, Multilingual Learning.) For example, BPS repurposed a position of unspent funds from FY22 and allocated \$4.5 million over two years to contract with City Year to provide additional Equitable Literacy curriculum implementation support at schools.





# BPS ESSER II AND III ALLOCATION AND SPENDING

## ESSER II and III Allocation Strategy

Below is the breakdown of BPS’ plan for spending among different types of investments that serve specific purposes in the district’s effort to Return, Recover, and Reimagine in the wake of the pandemic.

**\$161.5 Million  
Directly to  
Schools**

**School Plan Investments: An average of more than \$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.**

During community meetings, BPS 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 unprecedented funding was used deliberately and strategically. With the guidance of the [ESSER Commission](#) (which included school leaders, superintendents, students, family, and teacher representatives from across the country), BPS is using a per pupil formula where schools receive \$863.47 for students with special needs, English learner, or low-income designations. In the final fiscal year of ESSER (school year 2023-2024), schools’ ESSER allocation will remain the same as FY23 (school year 2022-2023), This decision was made to: (1) Sustain programming for schools who saw decrease in enrollment of students with disabilities, multilingual students, students with disabilities who are also multilingual students, and low income students, and (2) Avoid future fiscal cliffs for schools whose allocations increased. [To see each school's allocations for FY22-FY24, click here.](#) BPS 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. Schools developed proposals that are aligned to their Quality School Plans, informed by their school community, and meet the federal, state, and BPS guidance. All school plans have designated measures where we expect to see student and school impact.

**Over \$200 Million  
Allocated to  
Schools through  
the Central Office**

**More than \$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 benefit schools and their students directly, but are planned, purchased, and supported through the district. BPS 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. Each district have drafted work plans in order to operationalize how they will implement programming and have measures for their continuous improvement to ensure student, school, and district improvement can be tracked over time.

**\$18M Allocated to  
Partnerships and  
School Innovation**

In addition, BPS is 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.** BPS currently has plans to use these funds to



support major district priorities. Community partners are also funded as part of district and school plans.

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

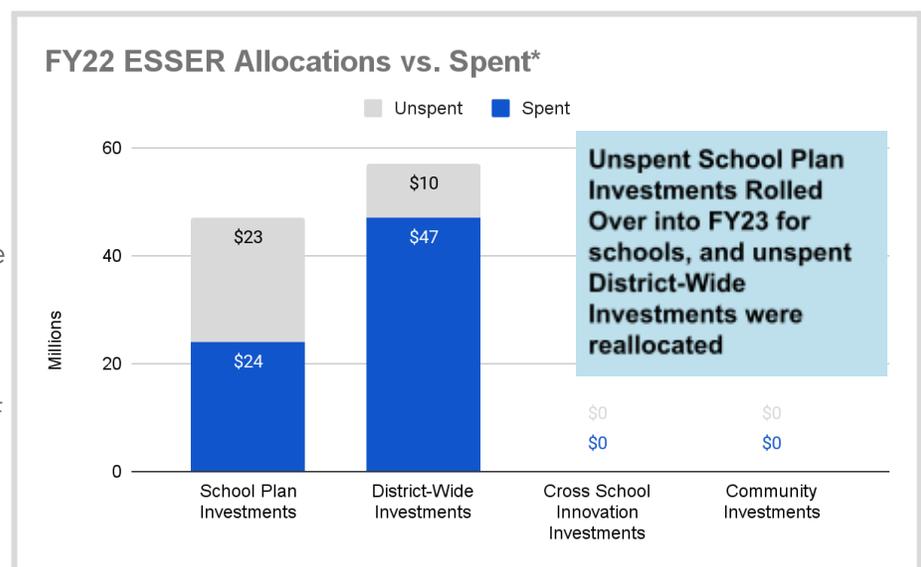
| ESSER II and ESSER III Type         | Anticipated 3 Year Total (2021-2024) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| School Plan Investments             | \$161,500,000                        |
| District-Wide Investments           | \$205,443,505                        |
| Cross School Innovation Investments | \$8,000,000                          |
| Community Investments               | \$10,000,000                         |
| *Additional COVID Mitigation        | \$5,048,247                          |
| **Indirect                          | \$9,315,156                          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>\$399,306,908</b>                 |

\*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](#).

## FY22 ESSER II and III Allocation Spending

In the Fiscal Year 2022, schools spent and encumbered \$24M out of their total allocation. Unspent funds from FY22 were carried over directly onto school budgets for FY23. For the district investments, BPS has spent and encumbered approximately \$47M in FY22. In FY23, roughly \$6M of the \$10M has been reallocated to support priority district initiatives, for example partnering with City Year to complement our Equitable Literacy efforts. A number of school leaders across the district





requested to work with City Year through their ESSER School Investments and BPS saw a need across the district. Therefore, the unspent funds were reallocated. In FY22, BPS did not plan for/anticipate spending for the Community and Cross-School Innovation Investments bucket.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### What are we trying to achieve

The Boston Public Schools [Racial Equity Planning Tool](#) has been an integral part of helping the district actualize its commitment to close opportunity and achievement gaps through leveraging ESSER funds. BPS is balancing the need to spend quickly while also having an impact on students. According to national experts, the gold standard of traditional return on investment approaches in education that evaluate longer-term programs through the student outcomes they achieve doesn't match well with ESSER's shorter timeline. Therefore, our approach to spending versus outcomes is to focus on "continuous improvement" toward student outcomes as a way to assess and improve the use of ESSER, especially in FY22 when implementation was in its first year, and then ensure the district has a strong sustainability plan (see Sustainability section of this report for more details).

The following seven focus areas for ESSER funding allocations were identified based on community feedback from more than 35 engagements with 1500+ stakeholders. In addition, we commissioned the [Rennie Center's report](#) to help the district focus on key leverage points to address using ESSER dollars, and to later sustain over the long term in the district's regular operational budget. The focus areas are designed with BPS students at the center, focusing on what they need in order to thrive.

1. **Strengthen Core Instruction**
2. **Ensure Inclusion**
3. **Accelerate Multilingual Learning**
4. **Create High Quality Pathways**
5. **Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity**
6. **Engage Communities & Families to Support Student Safety**
7. **Improve School Environments**



ESSER is playing a key role in expanding opportunities for students in the short term, with the annual BPS operating budget being a critical lever now and into the future. Please see the "Sustainability" section for more details.



## FY22 District Implementation Highlights by Focus Area

ONE

### Strengthen Core Instruction Investments

**\$45,074,137 in district investments to strengthen core instruction and, in FY22, BPS spent \$7,663,059 in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

The pandemic has revealed further disparities in literacy skills that impact achievement in all subject areas. This requires that BPS double down on its efforts to implement explicit evidence-based reading and writing support for all students in every school. Through the district's equitable literacy strategy, all students actively engage in culturally and linguistically responsive, standards-aligned grade-level tasks and texts daily in all content areas. With a persistent focus on grade-level access, all students will be able to attain the knowledge, skills, and capacities to succeed. Furthermore, these efforts allow BPS to prioritize discipline-based literacy, a way of teaching reading and writing skills tailored to the subject area being studied (i.e., science, social studies, and mathematics). This enables educators to recognize earlier when gaps form and prevent them from forming in the first place. These efforts are foundational for all students to reach their full potential and bridge the educational disparities arising from the pandemic and beyond. As we strengthen core instruction, we understand that we need to simultaneously provide individualized academic support that students can access in and out of school.

On the next page, there are individual district investments that are strengthening core instruction and select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).





## Accelerate Student Learning Equitable Literacy and Student Intervention

- **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 (funded by general funds) of library staffing into every school. (Page 18 in [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 16 in [district appendix](#))
- **City Year and Equitable Literacy**- The City Year Program will provide additional Equitable Literacy curricular implementation support to 11 schools. (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 20 in [district appendix](#))
- **Enabling Individualized Learning through Balanced, Anti-Racist Assessment Systems and Data Literacy (formerly known as 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. Instructional Leadership Teams use MAP Growth assessment data in reading and math, in addition to other information, to closely monitor student progress and adjust instruction. (Page 21 in [district appendix](#))
- **Regional Recovery Directors** - In FY22, this investment was proposed to support school Instructional Leadership teams to develop academic recovery plans for the communities. However, the district has moved to an overall regional model of support based on data and coaching, and this investment no longer needs to be funded on ESSER. (Page 26 in [district appendix](#))

**Increased Student Library Access by 40%**

Increase in student library access compared to FY21 and a total of 62% of schools now have access.

**Trained Over 400 Teachers & 30 Administrators**

Teachers and Administrators received Professional Development on Equitable Literacy LETRS Training

**Distributed Curriculum to 76 Elementary Schools**

Elementary Schools received rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum materials.

**Identified 11 Schools to Partner with City Year**

Chose 11 schools for additional City Year Equitable Literacy Support based on criteria such as Opportunity Index and City Year's Conditions for Success

**Over 17,000 Students Used Personalized Learning Platform**

Over 17,000 students used Lexia to personalize their learning through an adaptive learning platform, and 390 teachers integrated adaptive learning platform into their teaching



### Accelerate Student Learning Through Extended Learning Time

- **Acceleration Academies<sup>1</sup>** - Accelerate academic recovery with an emphasis on meeting the needs of English Learners at high needs schools through February and April vacation academies. Lessons build toward a project/problem-based performative task which provides students an opportunity to integrate their learning, strengthen academic skills and engage with complex text and tasks. (Page 44 in [district appendix](#))
- **Summer Recovery and Expansion<sup>2</sup>** - Expand access to higher quality summer learning and enrichment programs by purchasing additional seats and capacity. (Page 9 in [district appendix](#))
- **Tutoring Access through Paper Education** - Support immediate academic recovery by ensuring all students have access to tutoring in all subjects outside of the school day. (Page 25 in [district appendix](#))

**Developed Project-Based ELA and Math Acceleration Academy Curricula**

ESSER one-time funds used to strengthen acceleration academies through project-based ELA and Math Curricula. Staff were trained to implement curricula.

**Reached Over 50 Schools to Provide Project/ Problem-Based Learning.**

Acceleration Academies were hosted by 50 schools, and attended by 15,90 participants for literacy and 1,675 for math.

**Served Over 1,000 Additional Students through Summer Learning Academies**

Schools & community partners support students recover academic and social emotional skills and bridge the opportunity gap exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Elevate Teacher Leadership to Strengthen Professional Development

- **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 20 in [district appendix](#))

**35 Grants Awarded to Support Teacher Leadership**

Telescope- Teacher leadership Fund Grants awarded and in progress.

<sup>1</sup> Acceleration Academies investment is an investment that overlaps across two ESSER focus areas. In FY22, the allocation and spending is tracked under Accelerate Multilingual Learning.

<sup>2</sup> Summer Recovery and Expansion is an investment that overlaps across two ESSER focus areas. In FY22, the allocation and spending is tracked under Engage Families and Communities.



Started in FY23- Deepen Science Experience and Provide Ethnic Studies

- **Ethnic Studies** - Develop the materials and professional expertise to offer Ethnic studies at all secondary schools by 2025. This will include: co-constructing Ethnic Studies curriculum and projects with community members reflective of the communities that BPS serves (including students, educators, families and community organizations that work directly with BPS students and families). (Page 24 in [district appendix](#))
- **Outdoor Teaching and Learning in Science** - Deepen science learning experiences by creating more than 60 new outdoor learning spaces, and providing students across schools with expanded access to rites of passage trips to nature and science sites. (Page 23 in [district appendix](#))

TWO Ensure Inclusion Investments

**BPS is funding \$16,734,233 in district investments to support inclusion for students with disabilities, and in FY22 BPS spent \$2,748,277 in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

BPS is committed to fostering an inclusive environment by maximizing every student’s potential. The recently negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) provides the district with a unique opportunity to move this work forward in an expedited way in partnership with its educators closest to our students. Ensuring every school is inclusive requires BPS to rethink, retrain, and reconsider how it operates as a district. BPS is committed to leveraging the knowledge of its students and use of inclusive methods and practice of teaching and instructional materials to support all students with what they need.

The district’s priority is also to further partner with families in the individualized educational program (IEP) process and placement of students in the least restrictive environments (LRE). This will require multiple years of investment. BPS will continue to invest in a subset of schools to make the necessary structural changes to ensure the full complement of classrooms in each school will be able to provide a continuum of services for every student. Through these investments, BPS students will be able to develop the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary for academic success, like reading, writing, and mathematics skills, and the ability to think critically and solve problems.

As BPS moves toward district-wide expansion of inclusive education, it will also lay the foundation for all schools with the following:

- **Strong Tier 1 Core Instruction.** This means helping students build the foundational skills they need to succeed by having grade-level culturally and linguistically responsive curricula. Furthermore, Tier 1 core instruction also includes social and emotional skills, such as self-regulation and communication.
- **Implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).** This means building out district resources for training around the use of data that informs how Tier 1 core instruction is impacting student outcomes. Using this data allows educators to closely monitor progress throughout the year



to identify interventions and resources that may be needed for a student who is not yet meeting grade-level expectations, including referrals and services for special education.

Below are the individual district investments that are strengthening core instruction and select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).

### Provide Compensatory Services to Address Learning and Service Loss

- **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. The services will predominantly occur after school, on Saturdays, and/or during summer learning time. Depending on the needs of the student, services will include tutoring through Catapult, individualized in-school support, or other academic supports and will be provided by a combination of partner organizations with expertise in servicing students with disabilities and BPS staff. (Page 41 in [district appendix](#)).

**Purchased Program to Provide Services to Students with Disabilities**

Catapult is now available for the district to provide disabilities related services.

### Started FY23: Support for Students Disabilities and Ensure Inclusion

- **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. Piloting new “partial inclusion” models at four schools to operational and instructional best practices
  - Provide up to sixty schools with dedicated planning and coaching supports to prepare for adoption of inclusion models
  - Develop and deliver a scope and sequence for professional learning to support staff at schools adopting inclusion models
  - Scale the use of Universal Design for Learning principles to general and special education teachers across the district (Page 40 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 42 in [district appendix](#))



## THREE

### Accelerate Multilingual Learning Investments

**BPS is funding \$21,193,694 in District-wide investments that are specifically supporting English learner students, and in FY22 the district spent \$5,291,074<sup>3</sup> in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

To accelerate multilingual learning and provide better experiences for English Learners, BPS is providing students with immediate access to interventions and support, while making long term investments in learning experiences that celebrate and support linguistic diversity. ESSER is complimenting the district's efforts to expand multilingual education through the OMME Strategic Plan. BPS has been experiencing declining enrollment over the past decade and during the pandemic, while also seeing enrollment growth among our multilingual learners. This is welcome news for the district and will require multiple years of investment. BPS will continue to align its investments with the [Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education strategic plan](#) in this budget and future budgets. BPS will continue to support its commitment to expanding native language access by allocating funds to increase bilingual education programming and meet the social and emotional needs of our Multilingual Learners with Limited and Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). BPS will leverage students' home language and reshape multilingual education in Boston to ensure all students' needs are met. The district will accomplish this by engaging the community to plan for a multi-year expansion of bilingual, heritage, and world language programming, including student attainment of the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy. Furthermore, special considerations will be taken to ensure that all Multilingual Learners with Disabilities (MLWD) receive appropriate services and support, including native language support. BPS will also invest in strong Tier 1 core instructional materials and training to improve instruction and outcomes across multilingual learner programming.

On the next page, there are the individual district investments that are strengthening core instruction and select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).



<sup>3</sup> Acceleration Academies investment is an investment that overlaps across two ESSER focus areas. In FY22, the allocation and spending is tracked under Accelerate Multilingual Learning. However, we shared the progress monitoring under "Strengthen Instructional Core" only to avoid repetition.



## Accelerate Multilingual Learning through Assessments and Improve Translation/Interpretation Services

- **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 46 in [district appendix](#))
- **Information Access: 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 45 in [district appendix](#))

**3,809 Multilingual Students Assessed for Instructional Purposes**

3,809 students took the WIDA English Language Screener Assessment in FY22 to provide updated English progress information for instructional purposes.

**Trained 50 Staff Members**

50 BPS Staff participated in Translation and Interpretation Training

## Started FY23

- **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 47 in [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 43 in [district appendix](#))





## FOUR Create High Quality Pathways Investments

**BPS is funding \$4,158,104 in district-wide investments to build High Quality Pathways, and in FY22 BPS spent \$193,292 in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

The pandemic has exacerbated inequitable outcomes among our secondary school students. To ensure better outcomes in the years to come, BPS will focus its efforts on centering the assets and identities of young people by leveraging their voices to strengthen multiple pathways for post-secondary success. One primary goal is to create seamless transitions for all students as they graduate and continue to college or career. This can be done by expanding Early College and Career Pathways for all secondary students and creating alternative pathways and programming for students who need additional support in grades 7-12. Also, BPS aims to partner with organizations to provide robust academic and work-based opportunities for students tailored to their strengths. By doing this, BPS can help students become empowered learners, enabling them to be the best version of themselves and contribute to thriving school communities.

Below are the individual ESSER district investments that are creating high quality pathways and select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).

**Strengthen Support for Youth Off Track and Redesign HS Program for College and Career Readiness**

- Credit Recovery** - Enable secondary students to more effectively recover missed credits by redesigning and expanding centralized credit recovery programming. (Page 49 in [district appendix](#))
- High School Redesign and My Career & Academic Planning Grades 6-12** - 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. Extend access to Naviance career planning tool to students in 6-12. (Page 48 in [district appendix](#))

**8,700 Students and 65 Schools Access to Career and Academic Planning Support**

Open access to the MyCAP instrument made available to over 8,700 middle school students across 65 schools

**Support 30 High Schools to Effectively Implement Credit Recovery System**

Edmentum champions placed in 30 high schools to provide guidance and oversight of Credit Recovery System to better support students off track to get back on track to graduate.

**Started FY23**

- 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 50 in [district appendix](#))



## FIVE Deliver Equitable Access & Opportunity Investments

**BPS is investing \$24,614,083 to Deliver Equitable Access and Opportunity Investments, and in FY22 BPS spent \$6,597,868 in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

To deliver more equitable access and opportunity for students, BPS is addressing how its central office can support communities and distribute resources more equitably and also dramatically expand access to arts, athletics, and out of school enrichment.

Below are the individual district ESSER investments that are delivering equitable access and opportunity investments along with select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).

| Arts  |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High-Quality Musical Instruments and Capital Arts Equipment</b> - 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 27 in <a href="#">district appendix</a>)</li> <li>• <b>Cultural Partner Residencies</b> - 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 <a href="#">district appendix</a>)</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>100% of BPS Schools Have High Quality Arts Equipment</b></p>  | <p><b>2-3 Day Cultural Artist Residencies at Five Schools</b></p>  |
| <p>All Boston Public Schools now have access to high quality arts equipment that meets the Massachusetts Department of Education's Arts Standards.</p>  | <p>Delayed in FY22 due to covid restrictions of singing and playing wind instruments mid school year</p> |



### Diversify Workforce and Retain Talent through Coaching and Mentoring Support and Licensure Assessment Courses

- **Retention, Cultivation, and Diversity Programs** - Dramatically expand current recruitment, cultivation, and diversity programs to increase the racial and linguistic diversity of educators across roles. (Page 29 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](#))
- **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 35 in [district appendix](#))

#### College Readiness Mentorship Program Created

Teacher Cadet Program created a college readiness mentorship program to provide high school students with mentorship by college interns

#### 250 BPS Employees Completed Teacher Prep Course

MTEL Prep - 250 BPS employees completed MTEL course requirements and were awarded MTEL Vouchers. BPS employees were supported by 25 MTEL prep instructors

#### Professional Learning Sessions Designed and Implemented

10 Professional Learning Sessions & 7 Coaching Forum PLCs designed & delivered to those in the New Teacher Development Program across the district, focusing on high-impact mentoring and coaching practices

#### Educators pass Principal Licensure Required Tasks

Stipended 3 mentor educators who supported 10 educators in completing tasks required by Principal Licensure in FY22. 3 out of the 10 completed all tasks and passed; the remaining 7 will continue in the 1.5 year program.

#### Prepared 165 Paras to take ParaPro Assessment

ParaPro Prep ran 7-six session ParaPro prep courses, served 164 candidates, preparing them to take the ParaPro Assessment

### Expand Office of Human Capital to Address hiring and Staffing Challenges

- **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](#))

#### Hired 4 Key Positions to Support Schools with Hiring and Staffing Challenges

Hired for four key positions at Office of Human Capital Office to support hiring and staffing challenges across the district in response to the pandemic.



### Increase Transparency and Voice on All Major Policies, Plans, Budgets, and Initiatives

- **Targeted Consultation: Managers for Equity and Strategy**- Support school and district-office learning in these areas through coaching and professional development. (Page 36 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 33 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 31 in [district appendix](#))

#### Developed Equity Trainings and Resources for District and Schools.

Key trainings and resources to be used by Managers, including Racial Equity and Leadership (REAL) Series developed by Opportunity Gaps Office

#### Purchased Software Help Improve Timeliness of Data Dashboards.

PowerBI software successfully acquired and Interoperability established across Aspen SIS, EdFi ODS, domain-specific data This will lay the foundation for ODA and OIIT to provide timely data reports to inform policy and decisions.

#### Community Engagement for and Work to Reimagine the School Funding Policy Started

With substantial input from Community Partners, Afton Partners has been selected, and work on the new funding policy has started

### Started FY23: Improve Health and Physical Education

- **Expanding and Improving Athletics** - Dramatically expand access to organized sports at the K-8 and secondary levels through additional teams, equipment, coaching staff, and facilities maintenance. (Page 28 in [district appendix](#)).
- **BPS Moves Together: An Active Recovery Plan (formerly known as Physical Education Investment in June 2022 public plan)**- Improve student well-being by improving program quality and closing access gaps to Physical Education instruction. (Page 32 in [district appendix](#))
- **Whole Child Instruction: Empowering Through Health Literacy(formerly known 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 34 in [district appendix](#))



## SIX Engage Families & Community Investments

**BPS is directly funding \$28,539,773 District-wide investments to engage families and strengthen community partnerships, and in FY22 spent \$6,597,868<sup>4</sup> in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

To more authentically engage communities and families, BPS is redesigning the ways families will receive information. In addition, strengthening access to social-emotional supports and ensuring student safety help the district provide students and staff with physically and emotionally safe learning and teaching environments. This isn't a challenge BPS can solve alone. What happens outside of school buildings can and does impact students. BPS needs the whole city to support its students.

Below are the individual district ESSER investments that are engaging families and community investments along with select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).

| Improve Family Supports   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Building Family Liaison Capacity to Transform School Level Engagement Practice</b> - 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 14 in <a href="#">district appendix</a>)</li> <li>• <b>Information Access: Expanding the Family Helpline and Website</b> - 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 13 in <a href="#">district appendix</a>)</li> <li>• <b>Improving and Expanding Before and After School Programs</b> - Close access gaps for before and after school coverage by developing and scaling new low- and no-cost program models. (Page 5 in <a href="#">district appendix</a>)</li> </ul> |  |   |
| <p><b>Over 30 Family Liaisons Across 30 Schools Trained</b></p> <p>Conference/Training helps build Family Liaisons' skills needed to carry out high-impact family engagement and lead school teams in their implementation.</p>   | <p><b>Constituent Relationship Management System Implemented</b></p> <p>The Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system will be used to help identify challenges and opportunities to make improve interaction and engagement with constituents/families.</p> | <p><b>Assessed Landscape of Before &amp; After School Programming</b></p> <p>The initiative will focus on not only expanding access generally, but will specifically seek to increase the quality and breadth of options for English Learners and Students with Disabilities, who have had limited tailored options for these programs in the past.</p> |

<sup>4</sup>Summer Recovery and Expansion is an investment that overlaps across two ESSER focus areas. In FY22, the allocation and spending is tracked under Engage Families and Communities. However, the progress monitoring update was shared in Strengthen Core Instruction of this report.



Social Work, Restorative Justice, and Mental Health

- **Community Hub School Expansion (formerly Welcoming and Supportive Schools: Recovery Services and Community Hub School Expansion in June 2022 Report)**- 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](#))
- **Recovery and Stability: 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 9 in [district appendix](#))
- **Succeed Boston**-Succeed Boston provides trauma-informed individual and group counseling, restorative practices, social and emotional skill development, conflict resolution, violence prevention, substance use education and support to students who have been suspended out of school for serious Code of Conduct. This funding will expand on a new approach to support students by building adult skills and resources to support the development and practice of in-school alternatives for students to prevent student behaviors becoming Code of Conduct infractions that result in out of school suspensions (e.g., bullying prevention and intervention, restorative conversations, substance use prevention, social and emotional skill building - including decision-making skills, use of social media, cooperative discipline, LGBTQ-IA education and understanding civil rights.) (Page 12 in [district appendix](#))
- **Social Work, Restorative Justice, and Mental Health Supports**- Provide professional development and support, enabling school social workers and other school-based restorative practices leaders to provide culturally sustaining direct services and support the antiracist systems work that create healing centered spaces in schools. (Page 7 in [district appendix](#))

**Served Over 200 Students/Families experiencing homelessness or at risk**

165 Students/Families supported by the Early Homeless Prevention Program. 200 Students/Families experiencing homelessness have been served by the Boston Housing Authority Voucher Program. 196 priority youth have been Provided Academic Mentoring

**Community Hub Coordinators Get Feedback to learn needs and Opportunities**

Community Hub Coordinators that were installed in their school communities during the 2021-2022 school year began needs and opportunity assessments through surveys and interviews in order to make a plan for Hub activities and partnerships in FY23

**Restorative Justice Training Offered to All Schools.**

Restorative Justice professional development offered to all schools in the district, including summer stupendous opportunities to ensure at least 1 staff per school is trained in Restorative Justice practices



### Started FY23: Additional Social Emotional Supports

- **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](#))

## SEVEN

### Improve School Environments Investments

**BPS is funding \$64,919,550 in district investments to enhance school environments, and in FY22 spent \$18,490,142 in the first year of planning and initial implementation.**

To improve the school environments that children learn in every day, BPS is making unprecedented investments in clean air and water, addressing COVID-19 health and safety concerns, and are setting up long term improvements to how we maintain its buildings. Long-term, the district is committed to executing several district-wide projects, including the Green New Deal for BPS, to help improve students' learning experiences and access to resources. It is crucial to ensure that these projects are carried out with genuine family and community engagement practices to increase trust within the BPS community and receive helpful feedback. These efforts can help shape the direction of these projects, hold BPS accountable, and ensure the district is fully meeting the needs of its students.

On the next page, there are the individual district ESSER investments that are improving school environments and select highlights of their current progress. Read more details about them in the [district appendix](#).





### Ensure Safer Student and Staff Return and Support Covid Safety

- **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 53 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 54 in [district appendix](#))

#### All BPS Schools receive antigen tests and PPE, such as face masks

School communities were provided with universal access to antigen testing during key surges, and specialized Personal Protective Equipment provided to nurses, educators, and others.

#### Ensure there are spaces in all schools to help present COVID Transmission.

Tents and outdoor spaces provided to schools where indoor facilities were not conducive to preventing COVID transmission

#### Increase COVID Response Supports to district-wide

COVID response coordinators stipend to provide support to all BPS schools in FY22. Increased district wide Contact Tracing support through outsourcing, along with the hiring of two COVID-19 Special Project Managers.

### Reassess School Building Needs and Improve Water and Air Quality

- **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 52 in [district appendix](#))
- **Clean Water Access** - Improve water access at school buildings by returning drinking fountains to service and acquiring portable sinks. (Page 54 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 51 in [district appendix](#))

#### Over 1,400 New Air Conditioners Across Schools.

1400+ new air conditioning units installed across schools

#### Assessment to Identify Schools that Need Facilities Improvements Began

Established processes to conduct the Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) with minimal disruption to school operations and began assessment in summer of 2022. The district had conducted a similar assessment a number of years ago. However, it is being updated to include the specific health and safety needs presented by COVID guidelines, such as the importance of air quality.

#### 100% BPS Schools Have Air Quality Monitors

Air Quality monitors installed in all BPS schools. Indoor Air Quality Monitoring system launched, complete with online dashboard. In addition, air filters in all schools have been serviced.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Interim ESSER Sustainability Strategy

Considering the last two years of ESSER, BPS has two sustainability challenges facing schools: ESSER funding coming to an end and managing the general funds allocated to hold schools harmless from enrollment declines for the last two fiscal years. To decrease the fiscal cliff, planning for sustainability has already begun. Key elements of the district's interim ESSER sustainability strategy are the following:

- Spend ESSER on one-time costs that could make an impact on students' experience far beyond the life of ESSER. **For example, BPS is reinvesting in music and arts equipment that will last 10 years or more.**
- Pair 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.**
- Place immediate costs on ESSER with a plan to transition those costs onto the annual BPS Operational budget. **For example, BPS is 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.** This year, BPS will begin to invest in a subset of schools to pilot new ways to engage students in accessing Tier 1 core instruction. As the district constructs a district-wide inclusion expansion plan, it will also lay the foundation for all schools with Multi-Tiered System of Support training, infrastructure building, and diverse learning experiences.
- Implement progress monitoring strategy to help district leaders understand which initiatives and school investments have been implemented most successfully so that they can prioritize sustaining and potentially scaling across schools the most impactful work after ESSER. Monitoring the effectiveness of this plan to meet student and school needs is embedded in the district's strategy. BPS put a cross functional internal team in place that specifically focused on ensuring effective project execution across the myriad ESSER investments.
- Structure investments to minimize personnel and use existing staff wherever possible to minimize shifts in staffing levels. **For example, BPS is developing and providing stipends to existing staff members to champion restorative justice programming in schools or stipend teachers to provide additional tutoring to students.** Ensure that a majority of personnel funded under ESSER are part of recovery initiatives that are intentionally designed to phase out after the grant. Identify high priority initiatives and associated personnel to sustain after the life of ESSER and work closely across the Finance team, the City, and partners to secure funding where needed. BPS under the leadership of the superintendent and School Committee will develop a more comprehensive plan to identify key additional staff that can be moved onto the operational budget over the next two years.
- **Move critical services currently funded by ESSER onto the General Fund:** BPS has worked with schools to identify current school-based ESSER investments aligned to the district's strategy for



inclusive education, multilingual learner program expansion, or equitable literacy, and we are moving these positions onto the general fund. **It is necessary to secure these positions beyond ESSER.**

- **BPS is shifting hold-harmless support from the general fund to ESSER. This approach means that schools will not be required to make cuts to services or support to students in FY24.** Superintendent Skipper has said repeatedly the district can't go back to the way it used to do things. The pandemic changed everything, and BPS needs to be even more focused on the needs of individual students – where they are. This will require all BPS employees to be nimble, to add more support for the district's most vulnerable students, and to measure their progress so it can provide every resource they need to succeed. **Therefore, BPS is not proposing a reduction in the hold-harmless funding; instead, the district is proposing a change to the funding source.** BPS will continue to maintain and increase community transparency around ESSER funds and align with student outcomes.

## Looking Ahead: Long-Term Sustainability Strategies

### Reinvesting Funds from Empty Seats in Classrooms

For the last two years, BPS has been monitoring to what extent enrollment declines were temporary and pandemic-related. This year, enrollment declined by less than projected - showing that this approach was at least partially warranted. Despite that, BPS is still anticipating continued enrollment declines in future years due to current demographic trends, as we have seen in other urban centers regarding the overall decrease in school-aged children and smaller entry-grade cohorts. In the next few fiscal years, schools will not be able to rely on our hold harmless policy to maintain extra capacity.



We need to confront our district's changing realities and shift resources in ways that meet student needs and accelerate improvement. This means that we will need to reconsider the number of empty seats in classrooms we have held harmless for the last two years and consider how those resources can be used to create equitable learning opportunities for all students.

We asked schools to look carefully at each classroom and what may make sense to combine while maintaining the required and appropriate class size. When schools were able to reduce the number of classrooms because of empty seats, **we did not reduce their budget or hold harmless amounts.** Instead, we worked with them to reinvest those savings in ways that are aligned with the six aforementioned priority areas.

**Reimagine BPS School Funding:** BPS launched the “Reimagine BPS School Funding” project and is working with a national expert, [Afton Partners](#), to analyze and transform funding policy and practice. For more than 10 years, BPS has allocated its funding to schools using a “Weighted Student Funding” (WSF)



model. WSF factors in each school's projected enrollment and the levels of need for each projected student to determine school budgets. As the district experiences citywide decline in enrollment, we recognize that the WSF model has impacted school communities unequally across the district and that this method too narrowly constrains school funding in ways that may be counter to the community's values. Information gleaned from the analysis by Afton Partners will have a fiscal impact in FY25 (school year 2024-2025). To read more about the Reimagine School Funding Project, [please visit the public website.](#)

**BPS will report to the community every six months through the end of the ESSER III grant.** Stay up to date at: [bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21](https://bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21)





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