

Use of ARP-ESSER III Funds Plan

Background

The American Rescue Plan Act, passed on March 11, 2021, provided \$122.7 billion in supplemental Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. The funds may be used for pre-award costs dating back to March 13, 2020 when the national emergency was declared, and funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2024. Cass School District 63 has been very proactive in its approach with using these funds as part of a greater plan to help our school district move forward in the best interest of the academic growth, social and emotional development, and physical health and safety of our students.

Plan Development Process

Cass School District 63 worked in collaboration with our staff, community and Board of Education in the development of the planned use of funds. The district has gained input through conversations with teachers and staff, opportunities for discussion and public input at Board of Education meetings, as well as part through community meetings. The school district is also being transparent about the use of ESSER III funds in regular district communications to provide at least 20 percent of the grant allocation to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, as well as to provide a healthy and safe physical learning environment for our students. The school district will monitor the implementation of each component and collect data through surveys to determine how best to continuously address and support the academic and social emotional needs of our students.

General Use of ESSER III Funds

The school district plans to provide a full-time Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Teacher to elementary students due to the loss of engaging, hands-on science and math activities during remote instruction, as well as to support student social and emotional growth at the elementary level, and to provide for the planning, design, testing, repair, replacement and installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in our schools for the purposes of improving indoor air quality, improving ventilation and to reduce the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, as well as to support student health needs and in-person learning in a healthy school environment.

Detailed Use of Funds in Cass School District 63

Following are the detailed use of the fund allocation of \$495,150 for Cass School District 63, subject to approval by the Illinois State Board of Education.

- Address the most critical HVAC and indoor air quality needs in our classrooms. The HVAC system is outdated and has been maintained far beyond its life expectancy and the goal is to replace the system in the most cost-effective

manner, while greatly improving indoor air quality, improving ventilation and reducing the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, as well as to support student health needs and in-person learning in a healthy school environment.

- Provide an elementary STEM teacher due to the loss of engaging, hands-on science and math activities during remote instruction as a result of the pandemic, as well as to support student social and emotional growth at the elementary level.
- Provide a digital, self-paced program to provide math and reading support to individual students.
- Provide specialized training for up to nine teachers in the area of reading, phonics, and dyslexia to assist students and support needs related to learning loss.
- Provide before and after school reteaching and enrichment for students identified by teachers and staff in need of assistance.
- Provide phonemic awareness curriculum.
- Provide social emotional materials and programs.

Please contact Superintendent Mark R. Cross at 331-481-4004 or mcross@casd63.org with questions about the planned use of ESSER III funds in Cass School District 63.