



Sulphur Springs Independent School District
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Josh Williams
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To: SSISD Community

From: Josh Williams

Re: ESSER III Use of Funds Plan (**DRAFT**)

Date: July 9, 2021

TEA guidance on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III (ESSER III) Fund application process references public notice for all federal grant applications before the District submits an application to TEA. To meet this requirement, SSISD provided its application summary and plan for use of funds as an information item during the June 14, 2021 Board meeting. SSISD now submits this **DRAFT** ESSER III Use of Funds Plan for further public comment.

I. Statutory Authorization for the ESSER III program.

SSISD applied for its allocation, \$7,984,629, of the \$11.2 billion appropriated to the State of Texas for public education purposes under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act through the ESSER III Fund. Funds may be spent for costs incurred March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2024.

II. Allowable Uses and Legal Standard for Use of Funds

a. Standard for Use of Funds

Under ESSER III, an expense may be incurred as long as the cost is **reasonable and necessary**, the LEA justifies the use of funds to the **intent** (to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools) of the ESSER III statute, and the LEA aligns it to an **allowable activity** in the statute.

b. Allowable Uses

1. Any activity authorized under ESEA, IDEA, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.
2. Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of LEA with State and local public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus.

3. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each student population.
4. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs.
5. Training and professional development for staff of the LEA on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
6. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of the LEA, including buildings operated by the LEA.
7. Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, how to provide guidance for carrying out requirements under IDEA, how to ensure other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.
8. Purchasing educational technology (hardware, software, and connectivity) for students that aids in regular/substantive educational interaction between students and instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
9. Providing mental health services and supports, including through implementation of evidence based full-service community schools.
10. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care, and supplemental afterschool programs, providing classroom instruction or online learning, addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.
11. Addressing learning loss among LEA students, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care, including administering and using high-quality assessments, implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students, providing information and assistance to parents & families on effectively supporting students, and tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
12. School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs
13. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.
14. Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities

15. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in the LEA, including continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA to the greatest extent practicable.

c. 20% Set-Aside to Address Academic Impact

LEAs must expend a minimum of 20% of their grant funds on:

1. Evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning, extended day comprehensive after-school programs, or extended school year programs; and

2. Ensure interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address disproportionate impact of coronavirus on student populations as defined in ESEA, Title I, Part A; students experiencing homelessness; and youth in foster care.

III. Meaningful Consultation

SSISD must engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders and give the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of our plan for the use of ESSER III funds. Specifically, we must engage students, families, school and district administrators, teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, and school staff. The process is ongoing, but to meet this requirement we have thus far engaged stakeholders as follows:

1. District Advisory Committee Meeting – May 19, 2021
2. Sulphur Springs High School Campus Advisory Committee Meeting – May 27, 2021
3. Community Survey (Blackboard and Facebook) – May 14, 2021
4. District Advisory Committee Meeting – June 17, 2021
5. SSISD School Board Meeting – June 15, 2021
6. Draft Plan Submission for Public Comment (Blackboard and Facebook) – July 9, 2021 – July 16, 2021.

IV. Plan for the Use of Funds

a. Spending for Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

SSISD will use funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance on reopening school in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning.

Specific spending recommendations, highlighted in blue on the accompanying detail, are for bottle filling drink stations, HVAC replacement, and to offset the cost of the District's Faulk custodial contract. We believe that each of these measures are important mitigation strategies.

The drink stations allow student access to water throughout the day without having to press their faces to traditional water fountains. Such a former practice, even well maintained, can cause the spread of germs and illness.

The HVAC replacement will address the effect that COVID-19 continues to have on our schools by improving the indoor air quality in our facilities.

The Faulk custodial contract provides for the ongoing cleaning and sanitization of school facilities to prevent the spread of germs and illness. In particular, the District believes that the supplemental cleaning practices most recently adopted (supplemental high-traffic surface cleaning, room spraying, etc.) will continue to have a tremendous impact on preventing the spread of germs and illness.

Response to Current CDC Recommendations:

CDC Recommendation	SSISD's Planned Response
Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks	Masks will be allowed but not required.
Modifying Facilities for Physical Distancing	SSISD will not modify facilities for this purpose.
Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will continue to be encouraged.
Cleaning and Maintaining Facilities	Traditional and supplemental cleaning protocols will continue.
Improving Ventilation	SSISD will replace older HVAC units to meet this purpose.
Contact Tracing	SSISD will not conduct contact tracing unless required by law.
Diagnostic and Screening Testing	Students (parents), faculty and staff will self-screen.
Efforts to Provide Vaccinations	Vaccinations continue to be available through local vendors.
Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	SSISD will continue to fully implement every applicable student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
Coordination with state and local health officials	SSISD will continue to communicate and coordinate with state and local health officials.

b. Addressing Academic Impact Through Evidence Based Interventions

SSISD will use funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year.

Specific spending recommendations, highlighted in green on the accompanying detail, include expenditures for a math interventionist, virtual teachers for the prior year, our Reading Academy, the "Sharon Wells Math" intervention program, "Do the Math" intervention program, computers for students, Gomez and Gomez training, Read 180, a comprehensive after school tutorial program, and Capturing Kids' Hearts' program implementation.

c. Remaining Use of Funds

SSISD is required to describe how it will spend the remaining available funds. Specific spending recommendations, per the accompanying detail, include expenditures for retention/recruitment stipends for district staff, Linewize classroom monitoring software, an additional social worker, and funding for utilities.

d. Monitoring and Ensuring the Success of Evidence Based Interventions

Sulphur Springs ISD will ensure that implemented interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students. The intervention process will be monitored continuously through classroom/program observations, analysis of common unit assessments, gathering and analysis of RtI (Response to Intervention) data, employment of the PLC (Professional Learning Communities) process, and analysis of state assessment data. Analyses at the student and campus level will provide direct input to campus and district needs assessments for coming years.