

CHALLENGE + CARE = SUCCESS  
**RIDGELAND**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 122



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**Use of Funds Plan American Rescue Plan (ESSER III)**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021 provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. An SEA must allocate at least 90 percent of its ARP ESSER grant funds to its local educational agencies (LEAs) in the same proportion that the LEAs received under Title I-A of ESEA in FY 2020. LEAs must reserve at least 20 percent of their total ARP ESSER allocation to address the academic impact of lost instructional time on all students, through the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Requirements (IFR) on April 22, 2021 requiring LEAs receiving ARP ESSER funds to submit an LEA ARP ESSER Plan and an LEA Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. If an LEA had already developed a plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the enactment of ARP that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i) but did not address all of the requirements in the IFR, the LEA must revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds. This applies even if an LEA has been operating full-time in-person instruction but does not apply to virtual schools and LEAs.

The IFR issued by ED outlines several requirements for all Districts to ensure that funds under ARP (ESSER III), specifically, are spent in a manner consistent with the new statutory set aside and that key stakeholders have been consulted in this process. The ARP also requires that LEAs have in place a plan for ensuring safety during in-person instruction (either in-progress or planned) as well as ensuring continuity of services should the LEA or one or more of its schools be required to close temporarily for COVID-19-related public health reasons in the future.

The following requirements and assurances pertain to both the statutory requirements and the IFR published by ED. Plans are required for all districts, regardless of operating status, unless a district is fully virtual with no physical location.

The Illinois State Board of Education Agency (ISBE) may create a single plan that includes all the required elements or may add in additional requirements, as it deems appropriate. Districts may provide any additional information they believe are helpful in assessing their plan. LEAs are required to make these plans publicly available on the LEA's website.

According to ISBE's guidance, local boards are not required to approve these plans; however, the local board is required to discuss the uses of funds.

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

RSD122 recognizes that safe reopening schools and sustaining safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being. The District will maintain the health and safety of students, educators and other district staff. To support the safe return to in-person instruction and sustain safe operation, the district developed the “2021-2022 Pandemic Health and Safety Plan”. The plan is available at:

<https://www.ridgeland122.com/article/516778>

The District’s plan has been continuously review since its implementation. In addition, as ISBE/IDPH/CDC guidance has evolved, the District’s plan has been revised to accommodate changes in the guidance. The plan is available at:

<https://www.ridgeland122.com/article/1436815>

Ridgeland School District 122 (RSD122) has received funding from the Federal government to assist with COVID-19 relief. This funding was made available through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant. ESSER funds have been provided to RSD122 under two separate grants, ESSER I and ESSER II.

ESSER I and ESSER II have provided RSD122 with approximately with \$3.7 million. The District has used this funding for remote learning technology and software, cleaning supplies, PPE materials, additional teaching staff, interventionists, professional development, and the purchase and partial renovation cost for additional facilities to support class-size reduction.

RSD122 has been informed that all Illinois school districts will be receiving additional funding, distributed as an American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III grant. The ARP ESSER III grant is based on student enrollment and is intended to provide funding for school districts to safely reopen in the fall of 2021 through 2024, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students. This third round of ESSER funding provides approximately \$7 million for RSD122.

As part of the ARP ESSER III grant requirements, RSD122 is required to provide opportunity for public comment on the use of these funds to ensure the needs of our students and our communities are best reflected in the district’s spending plan. At least 20% of the funds must be set aside to address learning loss. This can be accomplished through additional staff, interventions, afterschool programs, summer school, as well as other evidence based interventions. As the District reviews its finances each month at either their Finance Committee meetings or Board of Education meetings, ARP ESSER III grant budgets and expenditures are discussed. These meeting are open to public and opportunities for public comment are available.

RSD122 welcomes public feedback on how the ARP ESSER III funds should be spent. Funds may be used for any of the following purposes:

#### **Allowable Use of Funds:**

The activities that are listed in Section 18003(d) of the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Section 313(d) of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, and Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act that an LEA may support with ESSER funds are:

1. Any activity authorized by the ESEA
2. Any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).
3. Any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (29 U.S.C. 3271 et seq.).

4. Any activity authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).
5. Any activity authorized by subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.).<sup>2</sup>
6. Coordinating preparedness and response efforts of LEAs with state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments and other relevant agencies to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.
7. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
8. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students; students with disabilities; English Learners; racial and ethnic minorities; students experiencing homelessness; and children and youth in foster care, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.
9. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs
10. Training and professional development for staff of the LEA on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
11. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of the LEA, including buildings operated by such LEA.
12. Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the IDEA and ensuring other education services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.
13. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
14. Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence based full-service community schools.
15. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and enrichment and supplemental after-school programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

After public feedback and comments, the district's plan for the funding will be available to the public on the district's website.

**Public Comment:** Opportunity for public comment is available every third Wednesday of the month at the regular Board of Education meeting. Please see the district's website for the posting of the meeting agendas.

RSD122 will review and amend its plan if needed every six months for ensuring safe in-person instruction and continuity of services.

The remaining ARP ESSER III funds will be used as follows:

- Express Yourself Summer School Program including expenditures for salaries, benefits, services and supplies and materials.
- Technology purchases to support remote learning.
- Subscription for Mango Language to students and staff to support the district's EL population.
- Tuition reimbursement for staff to obtain their ELL and LBS1 endorsement to better service the district's EL and SPED population.
- Purchases for the Harnew Elementary School Mechanical Project to improve health and life safety as detailed in the grant expenditure report previously submitted to ISBE. The project included replacement of 3 rooftop units and related building automation system controls for VAV boxes, unit ventilators and other mechanical system devices. Project costs include cost of rooftop units, general contractor costs, and architect fees. The procurement process of the contract has followed the Illinois bid laws as related to construction projects.
- 8 math interventionists and 1 reading specialist hired to support learning loss.
- After school programs were offered throughout the year to support learning loss.
- 2 social workers were hired to provide additional social services needed by students.
- Purchases for curriculum materials such as Foundations by Wilson Language, FOSS Science materials and STEM materials, new math curriculum.
- Capital expenditures for playground renovations to promote unstructured play in an outdoor environment.