

10299 - ESSER III 3/20-9/24 84.425U - 2021

Status Report Details

Funding Opportunity: 9830-ESSER III - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III
Program Area: CARES-CRRSA-ARP
Status: Approved
Status Report Number: 006
Status Report Type: Annual Report
Reporting Period: 10/01/2022 - 09/30/2023

Initial Submit Date: Dec 12, 2023 1:48 PM
Initially Submitted By: Paige Carlson
Last Submit Date:
Last Submitted By:
Approved Date: Feb 11, 2024 1:53 PM

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Organization Information

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Organization Type*: Public LEA
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SAM.gov Entity ID: LA2LULFD6249

SAM.gov Name: Northern Cass School District

SAM.gov Expiration Date: 08/28/2024

Learning Loss and Accelerated Learning Recovery Plans

1. Information regarding learning loss of students identified within the district

Row	Subgroup showed greater learning loss compared to all students	Subgroup did not show greater learning loss compared to all students	Subgroup not represented
Free/Reduced Lunch (Low Income)	No	Yes	No
Students with IEPs (Special Ed)	No	Yes	No
English Learners (EL)	No	No	Yes
Racial/Ethnic Subgroup(s) ? please explain in the narrative	No	No	Yes

Subgroup gaps

Please provide a brief narrative describing the subgroup data above. The best response uses data and analysis from multiple sources and highlights any new notable developments since the prior December annual report was submitted. *:

Free and Reduced: Upon reviewing data from the previous years at Northern Cass, we did not identify a significant difference in the learning loss for learners who were identified as free and reduced. However, the number of families who receive free and reduced lunch has continued to be smaller when compared to pre-pandemic numbers. We have fewer families who have submitted paperwork to apply for free and reduced status which does not allow the analysis to be fully comparable. In previous years, we did identify a difference but found there was a link to learners who also received special education services in our district. As we continue our transition to becoming a Full Service Community School (FSCS), we are working to identify those families who may qualify for free and reduced lunch and assist them with the application process. We have been more focused this year on proper identification and communicating with these families of this support.

Special Education: Upon reviewing data from the current (fall benchmarks) and previous years at Northern Cass, we did not identify a significant difference in the learning loss for our learners who were identified as receiving special education services. Although these learners are below their same age peers in achievement, they continue to make growth especially in relationship to the goals of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). We reviewed AIMSweb, STAR, and NDSA. During this past year, we have realigned our special education staffing to ensure services are provided equitably across grade levels. We have finally ?right sized? our special education numbers and believe our MTSS system is now addressing the needs of all learners. We have consistency in our special education staff which has led to more learners being identified and will allow us to begin programming for them appropriately. We have also added an additional Behavior Interventionist (one for middle and high school and one for elementary) and an Intellectual Disability educator to assist with the increase in population. The implementation of a robust MTSS-A and MTSS-B process continues to provide services for learners in a proactive manner. Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework to provide all learners with opportunities to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally in school. MTSS-A focuses on providing high-quality instruction and academic interventions in reading and math matched to learner needs while monitoring progress frequently. MTSS-B focuses on providing high-quality instruction and social, emotional, and behavioral interventions matched to learner needs while monitoring progress frequently. Evidence is used to allocate resources to improve learning and support implementation of effective practices. Northern Cass has included in its negotiated agreement positions for MTSS-A and MTSS-B leads. These are educators who work both in special education and in intervention. The district MTSS team meets monthly. Finally, we have our special education and intervention educators PLC on a regular basis to align our services PK-12. Northern Cass is part of the Rural Cass Special Education Unit which shares a Director of Special Education across four districts. This allows Northern Cass to provide appropriate special education services. Northern Cass has a part-time School Psychologist, and 1.5 full-time Speech and Language Therapists. We will be adding an additional SLP for the 2024-25 school year. We no longer have access to a Level-D facility which was housed at Central Cass. This was removed due to staffing issues. We believe we can ?reset? the Level ?D? facility next year at Kindred Public Schools. English Learners: Northern Cass has less than 10 identified English Learners (0 identified this year) so will not

report on this data as the learners would be identifiable. Racial: Northern Cass has less than 10 identified learners in the various racial subgroups so will not report on this data as the learners would be identifiable.

2. School district plans to accelerate learning recovery for all students

- Yes ☒ Additional Personnel
- No ☐ Out of School Time Programming
- Yes ☒ Class size Reduction
- Yes ☒ Professional Development
- Yes ☒ Tutoring
- Yes ☒ New Curriculum
- Yes ☒ Mental/Behavioral Health Supports
- Yes ☒ Technology (hardware, software, computers)
- Yes ☒ Other

Strategies to accelerate learning recovery

Please provide a brief narrative that includes how the district and schools within the district utilized the strategies above to address learning loss/or accelerate learning recovery and notable areas of success and challenge.

Sources for data/information: accounting records, past ESSER applications; ESSER expenditures, etc. *:

Classroom Reduction: Northern Cass utilized ESSER funding to hire additional personnel for classroom reduction during the 2020-21 school year. We hired an additional Level 3 and Level 6 educator which reduced class sizes and allowed us to meet the conditions set forth by our COVID Steering Committee for a safe reopening. Due to our growth, both of these educators continue to be employed at Northern Cass in our elementary.

Mental/Behavioral Health Supports: During the 2021-22 school year, Northern Cass hired a behavior intervention strategist to assist with complex behaviors which became evident at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. This is now a full-time position which the district is utilizing to assist with trauma (through our special education unit). The district has also hired a shared Family Case Manager with Central Cass School District. This position provides learners and families with wrap-around services. Finally, we have hired a Site Coordinator to assist us with a transition to becoming a full-service community school. COVID-19 helped our district realize we must become a community center for the various communities we serve due to our rural location. All of these positions continue to evolve. They are important positions which we have built into our budget as we saw the positive impact on our learners and families.

Tutoring: We no longer provide tutoring as the cost of gas has made hiring college learners nearly impossible (to staff the program). During the 2023-24 school year, we have utilized learners (Luminaries) to provide tutoring for all levels. This began with only literacy but has now expanded to provide tutoring services (at no cost but for credit) for learners throughout our district. This has been a ?game changer? for our learners.

Professional Development: During the 2021-22 school year (and early into the 2022-23) school year, we have utilized funding to advance our transformation to personalized learning. This includes, but is not limited to, curriculum writing (progressions of learning) while also advancing our personalized professional development. However, we have recently engaged in conversations with educators and our Board of Education about reducing the number of professional learning days while increasing the number of contact days. This was discussed due to the significant number of days missed because of the weather (last winter). We have partnered with Transcend Education this year to work on flexible grouping, inquiry, and studios. We are working with Building 21 to develop a tracking system for our competency-based learning model.

Curriculum: We continue to use Super Kids and Step by Step) for grades PK-5 while also training educators in LETRS. We have committed to all elementary educators receiving this training. This is grounded in the Science of Reading. We also utilized these funds for professional learning linked to the new curriculum. We have decided to not ?reset? our math curriculum as our assessment results indicate significant growth with our focus on using ALEKS.

Technology: We have continued to purchase an adaptive software program (ALEKS) which has become a foundation for our math curriculum. During this past year, we have again had high math scores on the NDSA and on our interim assessments. By personalizing learning, we are better able to support learners by meeting them where they are currently at in their learning. All learners in PK-12 have a device and we utilize these

devices to supplement learning. Devices do not take the place of great educators but allow great educators to be more efficient.

Other: Northern Cass has utilized funding to pay for dual credit coursework which has allowed learners the opportunity to become choice ready for those who identify college as their first choice. It also allows learners who have been underrepresented at postsecondary to have the option of attending college by earning credit prior to graduating while not putting a financial burden on families. We have reduced the amount the district pays but we continue to fund this opportunity at a high level.

Learning Loss and Accelerated Learning Recovery Plans

Total % of ESSER Funds Expended by 9/30/23

Total %: 100.00%

3. Uses of ESSER Funds

Use of Funds	% of funds expended
Coordinate Emergency Response	0
Ensure Preparedness and Coordination	5
Purchase Cleaning Supplies	2
Educational Technology	6
Mental Health Supports	8
Supplemental Learning	1
Added Needs of At-Risk Population	30
Transportation	0
Coordinate Long-Term Closures	0
Professional Development	0
ESSA	0
IDEA (Special Education)	0
Perkins (Career & Technical Education)	0
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act	0
Indian, Native Hawaiian, & Alaskan Native Act	0
Address Learning Loss	13
School Facility Repairs and Improvements	0
Improving Air Quality	0
Implement Public Health Protocols	4
Additional Pay	8
High Quality Instructional Materials and Curricula	12
Acquisition of Real Property or Modular Classrooms	0
Construction Projects	0
Renovation Projects	0
Budgetary Shortfalls	11
Other activities that are necessary to maintain operations of and continuity of services in the LEA and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA (Please explain in the text box provided).	0
Total	100

ESSER Funds Utilization Narrative

4. Impact of ESSER Expenditures on Accelerated Learning

Yes Improved Test Scores

Yes Improved Mental/Behavioral Health

No More Effective Staff Training/PD

Yes Increased Student Access to Technology

Yes Increased Teacher Access to Technology

Yes Increased Learning in Math

Yes Increased Learning in English Learning Arts

No Increased Learning in English Other Content Area

Yes More Effective Curriculum Resources

No Increased Teachers and Staffing

No Improved Attendance

No Improved Graduation Rate

Yes Improved Choice Ready

No Other

ESSER Funds Impact Narrative

Please provide a narrative that explains in detail how the ESSER funds led to greater student achievement outcomes for each of the areas selected above.*:

The use of our ESSER funds have led to an increase in achievement in both math and ELA.

ACT (compositive average)

2020-21--20.88

2021-22--22.11

2022-23--19.81

ELA (NDSA)

State--44% proficient (45% in 2021-22, 42% in 2020-21)

NC--52% proficient (54% in 2021-22, 53% in 2020-21)

Math

State--39% proficient (39% in 2021-22, 38% in 2020-21)

NC--54% proficient (48% in 2021-22, 48% in 2020-21)

Choice Ready

2020-21--75-79% choice ready

2021-22--85-89% choice ready

2022-23-- 90-100% choice ready

Mental Health: Clients: Clients served: 57 learners. Hours of therapy provided: 1,023.55.

Therapy sessions provided: 1,016. Youth Outcome Questionnaire (want to see score go down ? anything over 30 is considered clinical): 36 learners completed the YOQ during the timeframe. Avg Pre score: 37.7 Avg Post score: 35.9. By providing mental health services, learners are able to focus on learning. We recently increased our services by one full day for the 2023-24 school year. More Effective Curriculum Resources: We invested in a new literacy curriculum (Super Kids) for PK-2 and Side by Side for 3-5. The initial data has been promising with our NDSA scores indicating we are above state average. Improved Choice Ready: Northern Cass saw an increase in choice ready skills during the 2021-22 school year (Insights ND). This is a result of our commitment to a Director of College, Career, and Life Readiness as well as a use of funds to identify relevant and authentic learning experiences for all learners. We have also utilized the Choice Ready grant to supplement this work. We have also used our general fund to pay for internships so learners can develop key skills for success. Everything in our district is aimed at creating experiences where learners can become choice ready and have their first option when they graduate.