

**Lee County ARP ESSER LEA Plan**  
**Updated 6-13-23**

The Lee County School district is committed to providing a quality education throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We will utilize ARP ESSER funds to help keep our students and staff safe and to close the achievement gap created by the pandemic.

**Meaningful Consultation**

To develop our plan, we started with sending an email communication to all of our staff asking what their needs were in relation to our mission and vision to help close the academic gap that COVID-19 created. All staff in the district, including members of KEA and KASA, could submit suggestions and items they needed. Our district and school administrative staff reviewed all applications of needed items and determined what needs we could fund through general funds or other funding sources and what were needs that were created by COVID and could be funded through the ARP ESSER funds.

Our district and school administrative team also met over the course of several weeks to narrow down the focus of the largest needs in the district. The elementary principal and counselor saw a need for approximately 30 kindergarten students to repeat kindergarten and another 15 first grade students who needed to repeat first grade. When the superintendent and instructional supervisor met in person to discuss the need for retention it was suggested by the superintendent to create transitional classrooms with smaller numbers of students to try to catch these children up with their same age peers instead of retaining them all with the goal being to be on grade level by the end of third grade. The middle high school principal and assistant teamed up to share their concern of high school students needing to repeat courses for credit and middle school students needing strong social emotional help along with academic supports. They met with the superintendent and the instructional supervisor to propose the need for additional staff to fulfill these needs.

Facility needs were brought to light throughout our district facility plan process. We had a committee of community members consisting of business leaders, real estate personnel, parents, certified personnel, school level administrators, classified staff, and central office personnel represented. Throughout the facility planning process many needs of the district were brought to light and the committee determined priorities.

A brief description of allowable uses of the ARP ESSER funds was presented at each meeting by the district superintendent with an opportunity for stakeholder input. Each idea was recorded, discussed, and addressed. Suggestions that fell outside the scope of the ARP ESSER spending guidelines which arose in the course of the meeting were also discussed as possible options for the use of other revenue sources.

The information generated from consultation with all above listed stakeholders was then brought to the table by school and district leadership to develop a rough draft of a spending plan. This draft was shared with students, community, staff, and all stakeholders at a Town Hall in person meeting held on July 26, 2021. All business leaders, community members, students, families, teachers, KEA members, KASA members, classified staff, and school administrators were invited to attend the Town Hall. The superintendent shared the draft plan with all stakeholders and received additional input on their thoughts on the plan. Those in attendance thought the plan was well thought out due to the amount of shared input in the draft.

A committee of district administrators was formed after the Town Hall to review all input and finalize the plan. It should be noted that there are not unions, civil rights organizations, or groups of people representing historically disadvantaged groups in Lee County. However, our FRYSC personnel did have input in both the academic meeting discussions as well as the facility discussions prior to the draft plan creation. We do not have a local KEA association that meets regularly but all KEA members had opportunity to provide input through mini-grants and our Town Hall.

Our future consultation plans include monthly update meetings which will be conducted in conjunction with other federal program meetings to regularly analyze the use of ARP ESSER funds and to implement budget adjustments if necessary. The district principals along with the district leadership team will meet each month to review the ARP ESSER goals and in turn report to the Superintendent who will update the Lee County Board of Education on the progress of the ARP ESSER plan.

### **Mitigation Strategies**

We put many things in place to prevent COVID-19 with our ESSER I and II funds, however ARP ESSER Funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on reopening schools in the following ways:

- a. We will monitor COVID-19 numbers in our school and community and make decisions regarding changes we need to make at any time throughout the school year.
- b. We will also follow any required mandates that are in place and realize mandates can be put in place or removed throughout the pandemic.
- c. We will continue to supply our maintenance and custodial staff with cleaning and disinfectant products so bathrooms and classrooms are cleaned multiple times throughout the school day.
- d. We will utilize the funds for building projects that will help us space students out in our cafeterias at both the elementary and middle school level.
- e. The instructional assistants we hire to help with learning loss will also be part of our mitigation strategies because they will help us spread large classes out into two rooms when needed to provide more space between students.

### **Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time**

The Lee County School district will utilize funds from ARP ESSER to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions in the following ways:

- a. The district utilized ESSER II funding to hold a strong summer school program for students in the summer of 2021, 2022 and 2023 using ARP ESSER funds.
- b. We have hired two additional elementary teachers and utilized one current teacher to teach transitional classrooms at the K/1 and 1/2 grade levels to help our youngest students catch up and meet all primary grade level standards by the end of 3rd grade.

c. A new full-time credit recovery position was established at our high school level to allow students the opportunity to take a credit recovery course at any period of the day.

d. We have created a new Multi-Tier System of Support classroom position to provide social emotional supports and academic interventions at the middle school level.

e. We have hired additional instructional assistants at all grade levels to provide additional one on one support for our students. The instructional assistants will be trained to provide reading and math interventions at the elementary school and multiple interventions at the middle high school.

f. After school programs for students at all grade levels designed to help close academic gaps created from the pandemic will be implemented.

g. We have implemented a Bobcat Virtual Learning Academy with a new virtual program from Schools PLP to ensure students who were successful with virtual learning and can't return to school due to family circumstances or a desire to continue virtual learning have a quality education that meets the standards. Our Virtual Academy has a Dean of Students to oversee this program and ensure success for all students.

h. Instructional programs such as Symphony Math, Schools PLP, Apex Learning, iXL, Coach Digital, and others will be utilized to assess where students are academically and know what skills and standards need to be focused on for each individual student.

### **Remaining Funds**

Preventing COVID and closing the achievement gap will take precedence in the spending of funds. With remaining funds, we plan to complete one major building project (LCE Cafeteria) that will help us spread students out in our buildings and utilize outdoor learning space.

When our elementary school was built, it initially housed less than 200 students. In 2015 we closed an older elementary school, built on to our existing elementary school, and combined the two schools into our current elementary. Phase 2 of the building project was supposed to include expanding our cafeteria to be able to hold additional students and to making a larger gymnasium that could hold our entire student body for programs and activities in a safe manner.

This expansion project was never completed because our bonding potential couldn't fund it, but with a current student population of 458 students it is necessary now more than ever before. In order for our students to spread out in the cafeteria and get the entire student body through the cafeteria line in an effective and efficient manner, we need a new cafeteria. Because we also need to have a gymnasium that will hold the entire student body and be able to spread out in the gym, we believe it will be most effective to move the cafeteria to our existing gymnasium and build a new gymnasium.

During this phase of the project, we will also be creating three new classrooms in the existing cafeteria which will allow us to house smaller groups of students in more classrooms as well as have resource and support classrooms.

The second major project (multi-purpose building) that was planned will not be possible due to the higher than expected cost.

Our remaining funds will be accessed as our major construction project ends to see what are our highest areas of need with whatever funds remain.