



American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund Plan for Rockbridge County Public Schools

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' **academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs**.

Rockbridge County Public Schools (RCPS) has been awarded \$4,131,544 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Timothy Martino, tim_martino@rockbridge.k12.va.us, (540) 463-7386.

Section 2: Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

ARP Act ESSER III funds may be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#) on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning. RCPS will use approximately 23% of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

Rockbridge County Public Schools has maintained effective prevention and mitigation strategies throughout the 2020-2021 school year. The division intends to continue to support these efforts in the years ahead. RCPS installed MERV filter systems in each of our six schools. The division will need to continually change filters throughout the next several school years in order to keep air circulation as clean as possible. In addition, the division will continue to allocate funds to purchase items that support our mitigation and prevention efforts such as, but not limited to: face coverings, thermometers, disinfectant wipes, storage items, and fogging sprayers/solutions. Custodial teams will have additional cleaning supplies on hand should there be additional COVID19 outbreaks. Funds may also be allocated to increase bus runs if social distancing requirements are needed on school buses. RCPS will also upgrade outdoor walking tracks and increase the amount of learning spaces that can be accessed by all learners, including outdoor classrooms. Replacement windows will be installed at Rockbridge County High School to ensure that the seals are tight to allow for cleaner filtered air in classrooms.

Section 3: Addressing Unfinished Learning

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. RCPS will use approximately 33% of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below. This allocation far exceeds the ARP Act requirements.

Rockbridge County Public Schools (RCPS) is placing a strong focus on unfinished learning. We know the large extent of the academic struggles many of our learners experienced over the past eighteen months. Therefore, RCPS intends to expand outside of school learning opportunities, including after school and summer programs at all schools over the course of the next three years. This increase of offerings will provide remediation and support in addition to learning models already in place during the school day. Transportation, snacks and family engagement activities will encourage higher levels of enrollment for these out of school learning opportunities. Summer school has been in place in grades 6-12 allowing for remediation/intervention and the earning of lost credits at the high school level. An expansion of summer school to include K-5 would provide support for our youngest learners. To address the academic needs of our student body during the regular school day, RCPS intends to add several instructional positions including, but not limited to additional instructional coaches, a Project-Based Learning Coordinator, an Equity and Engagement Coordinator and an Instructional Technology Resource Teacher. These positions would support teaching and learning in grades K-12. Additional hotspots are also being purchased for students to advance their learning from remote locations.

Section 4: Other Uses of Funds

Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act permits school divisions to use the ARP Act ESSER III funding not reserved to address unfinished learning to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a variety of ways. RCPS will use approximately 26% of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

Section 5: Addressing Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Rockbridge County Public Schools understands that the social emotional needs of our learning community have been severely affected by COVID19. RCPS realizes there is a need to add additional staff who specialize in the area of mental health to be readily available to our learners, as well as teachers and staff. The addition of mental health specialists and a school counselor would begin to address this need. Existing school counselors will continue to be available at all schools. RCPS will also continue to offer a confidential Employee Assistance Program for all school employees with the cost covered by the school division.

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, RCPS conducted consultation in the following ways:

- With stakeholders, including: students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions – were provided an online survey to express their thoughts. Additionally, small group discussions were held in principal and teacher leader forums with RCPS Senior Staff to gather additional feedback.
- Community members, local organizations, and businesses were provided access to an online survey to express their thoughts in regards to allocating funds; and
- The public had the opportunity to provide input through an on-line survey and comment publicly at regularly scheduled school board meetings allowing division level leadership to determine needs and allocate funds accordingly.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

RCPS has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.rockbridge.k12.va.us/>;
- The plan is available in multiple languages and can be translated into 105 languages using the RCPS website;
- Upon request the plan may be translated for parents. Contact Dr. Angie Wilder, angie_wilder@rockbridge.k12.va.us, (540) 463-7386 to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting angie_wilder@rockbridge.k12.va.us, (540) 463-7386.