

ARP-ESSER III Funds Plan

Bethel Grade School District #82

Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III ARP Fund (ESSER III), the Department of Education awards grants to schools for emergency relief funds to address the impact that Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. Schools must provide services to students and teachers in public schools as required under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

The following is Bethel Grade School District's plan for using ESSER III funds to support reducing the impact of the pandemic on learning loss, student and staff social emotional concerns and the overall safe operation of the school building. Funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning.

Addressing Learning Loss

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a measurable impact on student learning. In comparing Illinois Assessment of Readiness scores from 2019 (pre-pandemic) and 2021, Bethel saw a shift in performance away from meeting or exceeding standards. We plan to address this with added enrichment activities and learning opportunities. These activities are designed to meet the needs of all students in different subgroups such as low-income students, students of color, children with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness or in foster care.

These enrichment and learning opportunities can be accomplished with after school programs and summer school programs. After school programs will be staffed with certified teachers and paraprofessionals. For an hour and half each day, the program will focus on resharpening school skills, homework help, and art and music exploration to address the academic impact of lost instructional time. The summer school program will also be staffed with certified teachers and paraprofessionals with the same goals in

mind. In addition, we will work on deficit skills not mastered during the school year.

Bethel Grade School will also use these funds to employ reading and math specialists to help close any learning gaps and help them regain classroom readiness.

Addressing Social/Emotional Concerns of Students and Staff

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an observable impact on the social and emotional health of our students and staff. The combination of moving in and out of remote learning and the troubles caused by family health and employment problems has played a significant part in the need for a school social worker. Bethel Grade School will contract with SPERO Family Services to provide a social worker for students and staff where needed.

Mitigation and Prevention Strategies

As we are still working to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, improvements can be made to the school building itself. Funds will be used to pay a custodian for efforts to clean and regularly disinfect commonly used surfaces such as desks, chairs and furniture. We will also purchase items that help commonly used areas to be touchless such as water fountains, bathroom soap and paper towels dispensers. Additional furniture will be purchased to help students better socially distance themselves.

A large part of this funding will be used to improve heating, air conditioning and ventilation in our classrooms. Many rooms have poor HVAC systems so this will be improved by purchasing new ones that use outside air better than what we have. We will also be purchasing air purifiers in rooms that will need extra help with ventilation.

Stakeholder Involvement

As we move forward with these improvements, Bethel Grade School will convene a group of stakeholders that involves, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, students, bargaining units, and our special education cooperative. The first of these stakeholder meetings will take place on March

3rd, 2021 at 5:30. This will provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of and the use of ARP ESSER funds.