

DC West Community Schools ESSER III Planning
September 2021

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act of 2021](#). The ARP Act includes nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund that allows state and local education agencies (LEAs) to take additional steps for continued safe in-person instruction and to address unfinished teaching and learning to mitigate the pandemic.

The ESSER III funding enables Nebraska school districts to promote safe school operations and equity-driven, sustainable, evidence-based programs to serve students – especially those who are the furthest from opportunity – and to continue to strengthen teaching and learning.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is committed to supporting school districts in implementing these unprecedented resources. In February 2021, the NDE released its [Nebraska Framework for School Renewal & Acceleration](#), which serves as a guide to improve outcomes and secure investments for all Nebraska students through key shifts, components, and core actions for 2021 and beyond. Additionally, a call for “renewal” to recommit to serving students who have been historically marginalized, including students of color, students with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, and English learners.

The ESSER III funding has the same allowable activities as the ESSER I and ESSER II funds; however a local school district must reserve not less than 20 percent of its total ARP ESSER allocation to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or an extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups.

LEAs may use their ARP ESSER funding on the following allowable activities under the [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#):

1. Administration – 10% administrative cap, includes indirect cost rate charged against direct costs. [Reference](#).
2. Any activity authorized by the ESEA of 1965, IDEA, AEFLA, and Perkins. **Note:** McKinney-Vento was not included as an allowable use under ESSER III ARP Act.
3. Coordination of preparedness and response efforts.
4. Providing principals and other school leaders with resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools. **Note:** Not included in ESSER III/ARP Act.
5. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities.
6. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs.
7. Training and professional development for LEA staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.

8. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a LEA, including buildings operated by such agencies.
9. Planning, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures.
10. 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 children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
11. Providing mental health services and supports.
12. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs.
13. **New ESSER II** Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including:
 1. Administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including differentiating instruction.
 - a. Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students.
 - b. Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment.
 - c. Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
14. **New ESSER II** School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.
15. **New ESSER II** Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities.
16. **New ESSER III** Development of strategies and implementation of public health protocols that align with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on reopening and operating school facilities to maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff. **CDC Guidance can be found at:** [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#)
17. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation and continuity of services in LEAs and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA. Any entity that receives funds under the Education Stabilization Fund shall, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19.

The U.S. Department of Education generally does not consider the following to be an allowable use of funds:

1. Bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures related to COVID-19.

2. Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of the school district.
3. Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations

There is a substantial list of requirements that must be met in order to use these funds. All proposed purchases must be approved by the Nebraska Department of Education and must meet all state and federal requirements. These expenditures will be subject to a financial audit. DC West will prioritize expenditures that are one-time costs, avoiding recurring expenditures that would affect future annual budgets. DC West's grant amount is \$742,779.

DC West Community School's administration is proposing the following areas for the use of funds:

- Curriculum Updates
 - Updated curriculums, textbooks and curriculum supplies that are next up in the review cycle
 - These purchases must be evidence-based and be on the "approved" list provided by the Nebraska Department of Education
- MTSS Intervention Support Materials and Resources
 - These purchases must be evidence-based and be on the "approved" list provided by the Nebraska Department of Education
- Expanded learning and enrichment activities (Summer School, After School Support)
- Classroom Technology to enhance sound, communication, and functionality
- Technology device purchases for students and teachers
- Social/Emotional Programs and Mental Health Support for Students and Teachers
- Professional development opportunities for teachers to address unfinished learning
- High-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including differentiating instruction.