



Amherst County Public Schools

Plan for Use of ESSER III Funds 2021-2024

On April 30, 2021, the Amherst County Public Schools received notification it would receive \$7,301,689.84 under the American Rescue Plan Act.

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.

The timeline for the allocating the funds is March 20, 2020 - September 30, 2024.

In order to accept and spend the funds, ACPS is required to meet the following criteria:

- 1) Develop a plan outlining the return to in-person instruction, present for public input, and include various stakeholders from Amherst County. The process is outlined below.
 - a. The plan was developed and submitted to the Amherst County School Board on May 13, 2021. After the plan was submitted to the Amherst County School Board, the public was offered the opportunity to comment through the Division's website, as well as during Public Comment at School Board meetings. Additionally, a survey was offered to citizens and stakeholders to provide input concerning the plan.
 - b. The Amherst County Public Schools posted on its website the *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services* for the 2021-2022 school year. This plan was posted prior to June 1, 2021, and can be found on the Amherst County Public Schools' website.
 - c. The plan outlined five guiding principles ensure a safe learning environment in order to meet the needs of all students and provide equitable experiences for *Every Child Every Day*.
 - 1) Provide a clean and safe environment for all students and staff to engage in learning.
 - 2) Set a purposeful focus on the Profile of a Virginia Graduate's 5 C's in Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, and Citizenship.
 - 3) Confirm that content is aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning.
 - 4) Use performance assessments that connect learning to real world experiences, and
 - 5) Establish and maintain tiered instruction to support learning loss.
 - d. The *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services* can be accessed at:
<http://www.amherst.k12.va.us/documents/2021-2022InstructionalPlan.pdf>
- 2) Plan for Use of Funds - Of the \$7, 301,689.84, at least 20% of the funds will need to address the academic impact of lost instructional time or learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions. These may include, but are not limited to summer learning or summer

enrichment programs, extended school day, comprehensive afterschool programs, extended school year programs, facilities repair and upgrades, and provide necessary resources to meet identified student needs.

Amherst County Public Schools will use funds to continue the following:

- a. Continue utilizing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment in the areas of reading and math in order to determine student academic growth. In addition, this assessment provides identification of specific instructional needs in areas where students may need research based strategies to close the learning gaps. (*Guiding Principle # 5*)
- b. Continue to provide instructional support staff at the elementary levels to assist with small group learning opportunities, as well as provide targeted skill instruction. This instructional support will provide additional opportunities for students to strengthen academic skill deficits. (*Guiding Principle # 5*)
- c. Continue to provide hot-spots for students who do not have at home Internet connection in order to provide access to instructional materials and resources outside of the school building. (*Guiding Principle #5*)
- d. Continue to provide custodial support at all schools to address cleaning and disinfecting schools. (*Guiding Principle #1*)

In addition, Amherst County Public Schools would like to provide supplemental supports to students, staff and principals in the following ways:

- e. Provide Reading Specialists at each middle school and high school in order to address individual and small group instructional needs for students in the area of reading, as well as support teachers in providing strategies to support academic success and close achievement gaps. (*Guiding Principles #3 and #5*)
- f. Provide an Elementary Attendance Officer to help facilitate and ensure student attendance and compliance for students in Grades Pre-K through Fifth. (*Guiding Principle #5*)
- g. Provide Math Specialists at each middle school and high school in order to address individual and small group instructional needs for students in the area of Math, as well as support teachers in providing strategies to support academic success and close achievement gaps. (*Guiding Principles #3 and #5*)
- h. Provide a Social Worker who will work with students in the division to provide mental, emotional, and physical health supports and assist with issues as they arise. In addition, the social worker may act as a liaison between home and school. (*Guiding Principle #1*)
- i. Provide CTE Specialists at each middle school and high school who will facilitate opportunities for students to investigate college or career paths and participate in meaningful learning experiences in order to develop into a *Future Ready Student*. These individuals will work collaboratively with the School Counseling Department to create pathways for learning for all students as they work to prepare to become life ready students. (*Guiding Principle #2*)
- j. Contract additional Day Treatment slots to support student social, emotional and behavior needs. (*Guiding Principle #1*)

The plan also includes the renovations to Amherst County High School. The information below describes how the remaining funds will provide new areas that can assist with additional space for learning opportunities for students. If approved, these projects can be completed within the timeline provided with the new funding. (*Guiding Principles #1 and #2*)

- k. Auditorium - new auditorium with 1400 seats would seat approx. 470 students (social distancing) to accommodate for standardized testing, assemblies, and presentations. This could be utilized by students and staff for large group events. The current auditorium could seat less than 100 students at one time.
- l. Commons / Dining / Toilet Rooms - new dining commons with seating for 400 would seat 180 students when social distancing. The current dining room will accommodate approx. 90 students with social distancing. The current gymnasium lobby would hold less than 20 occupants. The New commons would hold approx. 400 as a commons area for the gymnasium and auditorium. New toilet room facilities would permit 4 times the occupants and better social distancing than with the current facilities.
- m. Food Court - new food court will replace the standard serving lines providing more area for student area in the servery and more area for students to stand in point of sale lines and social distance.
- n. Collaborative Learning Lab - A large portion of the existing dining room would be converted into a Collaborative Learning Lab. This space will accommodate a large group of approx. 74 students with social distancing. This is a new space that would permit 4-5 classes without restrictions and 3 classes in one space with restrictions.
- o. Black Box Theatre - The existing auditorium would be converted into a Black Box Theatre, additional classroom and additional testing site. This Black Box Theatre could hold approx. 100 students with social distancing.

In order to utilize the ARP ESSER III Funds, the division must develop and make publicly available on its website the plan for the use of the funds. The school division must engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders and give the public an opportunity to provide input in the development of its plan.

Once the above criteria are met and approved, an application will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education by September 1, 2021, for its review and approval.

The Plan for Use of ESSER III Funds 2021-2024, will be reviewed and adjusted if needed every six months. Revisions to the application may be made as needed.