



PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Pittsylvania County Schools ARP ESSER Plan

This plan has been developed to comply with the U.S. Department of Education's requirement that each LEA that receives ARP ESSER III funds submit a plan that describes how it will use ARP Act ESSER III funds. This plan will be published on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website by August 1, 2021.

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**. Pittsylvania County Public Schools has been awarded \$15,397,558.08 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Pittsylvania County Schools.

Questions regarding the ESSER Application and other uses of funds under Section 4 should be directed to Tracey Worley, Director of Finance, at the following email address: tracey.worley@pcs.k12.va.us.

Questions regarding unfinished learning under Section 3 of this plan should be directed to Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, at the following email address: teresa.petty@pcs.k12.va.us.

Questions regarding the health and safety, social, emotional, and mental health components under Section 2, 3, and 5 of the plan should be directed to Robin Haymore, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, at the following email address: robin.haymore@pcs.k12.va.us.

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. Pittsylvania County Schools will use approximately \$0 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

Pittsylvania County Schools (PCS) has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff.

Pittsylvania County Schools continues to follow guidance from the CDC, VDH, and VDOE.

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

Parents may opt-out from mask mandates per Executive Order 2. However, masks are *required* for students and staff who have tested positive upon their return to school on days 6-10 of isolation. If a parent elects for their child to not wear a mask, or a student is unable to wear a mask, the child must remain home for the full 10 day isolation period.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Schools will continue to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer will be used.

Staff and students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces within the school and on school buses will be conducted to ensure cleanliness of all areas.

PCS will ensure that ventilation systems operate properly, increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, and that ventilation is adequate when using cleaning and disinfection products to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes. Cleaning and disinfecting products will be safely used and stored.

Prioritize disease investigations and/or notifications of disease to school community

PCS in conjunction with the local health department continues to monitor reports of cases of COVID-19 in the school community. PCS reports suspected outbreaks to public health and situations where the school has identified multiple cases within a specified core group. Public health epidemiologists can assist with determining if there is an outbreak and/or if there is in-school transmission.

Isolation and Quarantine

Quarantine is no longer routinely recommended after exposure to COVID-19 infected individuals. Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, who tests positive must stay home and isolate for 5 days. If they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days, they may leave the house. They must continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. Positive test results are to be reported the same as a report of any other illness. Anyone with a fever must remain home for at least 24 hours until fever free without the use of fever reducing medications.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

If necessary, students are referred to their healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing and/or screening.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

Vaccination clinics are offered to students via the PATHS Mobile Health Clinic at multiple locations across the division as well as through our partnership with the local health department.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities (with respect to health and safety policies)

The previously established exemptions to the mask mandate continue under Executive Order 2.

Coordination with State and Local Health Officials

Pittsylvania County Schools will follow guidance provided by the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Pittsylvania County Health Department. Community-specific data, as reported by the Virginia Department of Health, will continue to be monitored and reviewed.

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). **Pittsylvania County Schools will use approximately \$3,079,511.62 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.**

Administrators, teachers, and staff will address unfinished learning through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning/summer enrichment, comprehensive afterschool remediation programs along with small group and individual intervention opportunities during the school day. Additional funding is requested to provide summer school services for the next two years above the current state allocation which supports staffing and materials and supplies. This requested funding will allow for transportation personnel to transport students to and from summer school and cafeteria personnel to provide meals. Furthermore, this funding will pay for classes purchased through Virtual Virginia to support remote learners for the next three years.

In addition to PCS' use of funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, **PCS is also requesting additional staff to assist with meeting the social-emotional behavioral needs of all students.** Requested positions are provided below.

- School Social Workers (4)
- School Psychologists (2)
- School Counselor (7)

A more comprehensive description of how they will be utilized is provided in Section 5 of this document.

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. Pittsylvania County Schools will use approximately \$12,318,046.46 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

Pittsylvania County Schools plans to use the remaining portion of ARP ESSER III funding to assist with a communications infrastructure project to enable students the ability to engage in educational opportunities virtually and to install new central HVAC systems and replace old single pane windows at Stony Mill Elementary School and Southside Elementary School. These schools are 57 and 59 years old, respectively, and the new systems will bring each school up to code for ventilation and fresh air make-up. Studies have shown that improved indoor air quality in classrooms improves student health, attentiveness and ability to learn. When we load a classroom space with 20 to 30 children for several hours each day, CO2 levels will invariably begin to rise. Depending on the level of natural ventilation (windows and doors) and the mechanical systems used to condition the space, the amount of carbon dioxide in the classroom can increase significantly by the end of the school day. To some degree, this is a problem of our own making, an unintended outcome of everyday facilities practices. Safety and security concerns can also contribute to higher CO2 levels in classrooms. The new standards require exterior doors and windows to be secured during the school day and often include keeping interior doors closed as well. The days of propping open a door or opening windows in classrooms to let in a little fresh air are all but over. While higher than normal CO2 levels do not present an inherent safety issue, numerous studies have shown attendance and academic performance are negatively impacted. Students exposed to high CO2 levels become drowsy, inattentive, easily confused, and their capacity for learning is diminished when CO2 levels are high. Obviously, this is in direct opposition to the very reason we send our children to school. Therefore, we are pleased to be able to secure funding for these much needed upgrades. Any remaining funding after pricing is secured for the above-mentioned schools will be used for central HVAC replacement systems at another elementary school, Chatham, Mt Airy or Union Hall.

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

School divisions are charged with supporting the diverse needs of all students, while also providing them with an education that leads to a successful transition into college and/or career. Over the past decade, this task has become more challenging as educators struggle to address non-academic barriers to learning, such as anxiety or depression and the impact of trauma. **Even before the challenges of COVID19, schools were becoming more aware of the increased number of students with mental health needs, many of whom were not identified or supported.** Given recent events of COVID19, problems students present are likely to be intensified, and schools can expect a much greater number of students to struggle with learning due to mental health challenges, including those experienced by their siblings, friends, parents and teachers. In addition to using funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, PCS is striving to create a more streamlined approach to school mental health and wellness, Pittsylvania County Schools has begun to phase in an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) approach to their existing Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework. Specifically, PCS has begun the process of blending and integrating PBIS and Mental Health strengths into a single system of delivery focused on prevention and intervention. As such, ***a crucial step in embedding ISF into the PBIS framework is the expansion of the existing PBIS leadership teams to include both school and community-based mental health clinicians that work alongside teachers and administrators.*** Using combined school and community data, these personnel will work with their interdisciplinary teams to select and implement a continuum of evidence-based interventions designed to meet the social-emotional behavioral needs of all students. This wider range of perspectives, applied to expanded use of data, is focused on supporting all students from prevention through intensive support. To help meet that need, PCS is requesting funds to employ the following additional personnel:

- 1) School Social Workers (4) - PCS does not currently employ School Social Workers personnel. PCS is requesting a total of four - each one to be assigned to a specific “zone” area to support the work of our school-based intervention teams.
- 2) School Psychologists (2) - Currently PCS employs four full-time School Psychologists with a ratio of approximately 1 School Psychologist per 2,500 students. Note that the **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** recommends a ratio of one school psychologist per 500 students in order to provide comprehensive school psychological services. (<https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/critical-policy-issues/shortage-of-school-psychologists>)
- 3) School Counselors (7) - PCS currently meets the required school counselor ratios
 - (4) to add an additional counselor in the four large elementary schools: Kentuck, Gretna, Stony Mill and Southside)
 - (2) to rotate between the five small elementary schools to share an additional counselor: Brosville, Chatham, Hurt, Mt. Airy, and Union Hall
 - (1) to support the social emotional needs of students in the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, PCS 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;
- With Tribes (if applicable); civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students; and
- By providing the public the opportunity to provide input by completing a brief [survey](#) and taking such input into account.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

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

- The plan is posted [here](#).
- The plan will be available in Spanish.
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Mr. Todd Sease, Director of Elementary Education & Title III, Part A, Coordinator (todd.sease@pcs.k12.va.us) 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 Mr. Lee (Russell) Davis, Webmaster Digital Design Specialist (russell.davis@pcs.k12.va.us).