

Bedford County Public Schools American Rescue Plan
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Plan



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. Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS) has been awarded \$12,079,331 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to JeanMarie Johnston (jmjohnston@bedford.k12.va.us).

During the 2020-2021 SY, COVID-19 mitigation included social distancing, wearing of masks by everyone in school buildings, more frequent cleaning and sanitizing, individual supplies for students, and following Virginia Department of Health guidelines. K-6th grade students were spread out across elementary and middle schools to allow social distancing in classrooms and enabling these students to attend school daily for the entire year. Students in grades 7-12 attended school at the high schools at least 2 days a week and learned remotely on remaining days. In addition, these students received instruction in cohorts supported by learning coaches throughout the day. This kept students from moving through bell changes and mixing with other students to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. All students had the opportunity to attend school 100% remotely through Bedford Connects, BCPS's on-line school. A Mental Health Supports Team (MHST) was created to more fully serve student and staff needs. This is a division-wide team overseen by the Director of Student Support Services and includes division psychologists, Intervention Design Specialists, and school counselors. For the 2020-21 school year, this team provided social-emotional learning lessons for classroom use. School level MHST were also created and include School counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.

An in-person summer session was offered in 2021. This session had a longer school day and a longer duration, 5.5 hours a day for 6 weeks. Students were encouraged to attend daily, but that was not a

requirement as we wanted to serve as many students as possible.

In the 2021-2022 school year, all students will attend school daily; Bedford Connects will offer a 100% remote learning option for students who choose and who qualify. Social-emotional lessons will continue for all students. A minimum of two Intervention Design Specialists will be placed in every secondary school building to address the impact of COVID-19 on students' emotional, social, and mental health needs. Six additional intervention design specialists will serve the thirteen elementary schools in our district. Cleaning/sanitation mitigations will continue and, again, BCPS will comply with Virginia Department of Health guidelines.

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. BCPS will use approximately \$12,101,924 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

Additional custodial services will be sourced from Jani-King to assist BCPS custodial staff perform the additional sanitation/mitigation requirements. Touchless water dispensers will be installed in all schools to reduce surface contamination in high-touch areas. New HVAC will be installed in 7 school buildings. Five schools, several additional libraries and offices will have old carpeting replaced. The replacement of HVAC units and carpets will increase ventilation effectiveness and indoor air quality. AC ducts in all buildings will be cleaned, and two schools will also undergo mold removal, which will also improve air quality and eliminate additional threats to immune systems. All of these improvements will increase delivery of clean air and better dilute potential contaminants.

BCPS will purchase additional band/musical instruments, which will reduce the number of students sharing instruments, and instruments will be cleaned more frequently. BCPS will either out-source the cleaning or purchase instrument cleaning equipment allowing school personnel to maintain sanitation measures.

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 after school programs, or extended school year programs. BCPS will use approximately \$3,560,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

ESSER III funds will be used to counter the impact of lost learning due to lost instructional time in multiple ways. Though the enrollment of BCPS is trending downward, pre-COVID-19 staffing levels will be maintained to the extent possible, improving student to teacher ratios and providing smaller class sizes.

In addition, a number of new staff positions have been created including the following:

- One Special Education Supervisor of Compliance who will ensure that all students identified as students with a disability are receiving appropriate and timely services. She will also help identify unserved students and move them through the eligibility process as appropriate. This supervisor will also monitor the School Consultation Process to assist with Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies to ensure appropriate remediation has occurred to address learning loss prior to referral for special education testing.
- One learning coach for Liberty Middle School, which has traditionally struggled with accreditation due to low English SOL test scores in gap groups and which is Accredited with Conditions (though currently waived). This learning coach will work directly with LMS

English teachers, guiding them to improved curriculum alignment, instructional strategies, data collection and data use. She will also work directly with students as needed.

- Three learning coaches for Bedford Connects students who will be learning through the Virtual Virginia platform. These coaches will serve as academic coaches for remote learning students by providing oversight of student work completion and quality, as well as suggesting additional resources to fill gaps in student learning. They will also develop relationships with students and parents and provide an easily accessible division contact.
- Two Intervention Design Specialists (IDS), which brings the total number to -13 division-wide. These specialists will work with teachers and staff. They will create individualized plans for students who continue to lose instructional time due to their behaviors. IDS's will also create and provide professional development concerning classroom management and addressing social/emotional skills.
- One grant coordinator to oversee federal grants and research and secure additional funding to be used for instructional purposes including instructional professional development in evidenced-based interventions such as just-in-time lessons.

It has become increasingly difficult to staff certain areas of endorsement, including math, science, special education, and librarian media specialist. ESSER III funds will be used to encourage current BCPS teachers to add to their endorsements by financing the costs of qualifying for another high-need endorsement. This will increase the number of qualified, proven teachers available to BCPS students in the areas most negatively impacted by learning loss.

ESSER III will also fund summer programs of longer duration and longer days than our previous summer programs; 6 weeks instead of 3, and 5.5 hours rather than hours 3.

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. BCPS will use approximately \$1,020,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

Esser III funds will be used to purchase digital content for FY 2022, 23 and 24. This content will include the following: Virtual Virginia, IXL, Edgenuity, Brain Pop, Platform Athletics, Digital Atlas, Mastery Content, Newsela, Make Music, Edspire, and Major Clarity. These programs/applications will address learning loss that continues beyond the 2021-22 school year.

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

Many of the new staff positions were created to provide oversight of the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. The Special Education Supervisor of Compliance will provide direct oversight of the creation and implementation of Individualized Education Plans as well as Child Find responsibilities. This supervisor will also ensure that minority populations are not over identified in special education because of missed instruction rather than an actual disability. The special education staff will analyze school and division level test data (PALS, VKRP, running records, and benchmarks, etc.) to monitor and support schools with support services for struggling students.

Intervention Design Specialists will collaborate with teachers and administrators. They will be supervised by building principals and the Director of Student Support Services. IDS staff will be provided specialized training using Ross Greene's behavior strategies. There are two levels of intervention design specialists. Level I specialists have experience working with disruptive and struggling students, but may not have a mental health degree or background. They will be supervised by Level II specialists. The Level II specialists all have degrees in counseling, mental health, or social work. Their expertise with social emotional supports will be vitally important, especially at our

secondary schools, as we recover from the pandemic. All Level II intervention design specialists will be supervised by a school psychologist and work directly with a school's mental health support team.

BCPS already employs three English Learner teachers, who create and oversee implementation of Individual Learning Plans for English language learners. The Supervisor of Reading (Title I) supervises students experiencing homelessness as well as Title I teachers. This supervisor's responsibilities have been decreased to focus completely on reading, reading intervention, and reading specialists to support all students. She will analyze school and division data and provide professional development for teachers. The Supervisor of Math has also been given reduced responsibilities to provide the same level of support to all schools in math.

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, BCPS conducted consultation by presenting a draft of the plan to, and requesting input from, a number of stakeholders including members of the Bedford County Education Association, Bedford County Parent and Teacher Association, and the Superintendent's Advisory Committee, which consists of students, teachers, administrators, and staff. Each group contributed suggestions for improving the plan such as touchless water dispensers, deep cleaning of musical instruments and purchasing additional instruments, and funding to help teachers achieve certifications in hard to fill areas. The draft plan was also presented to the Bedford County School Board during a public meeting.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

The BCPS American Rescue Plan (this document) is available to the public on BCPS website (<http://bedford.sharpschool.net>). If the plan is needed in an alternate language or alternate format, contact BCPS offices (540-56-1045) or a school administrator.