

## ESSER III FUNDING PLAN

The intent and purpose of the ARP Act of 2021, ESSER III funding is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students.

The District must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. Comply with reporting requirements, which may include:
  - a. Methodology used by the LEA to provide services or assistance to students and staff in public schools; and
  - b. Uses of funds by the LEA or other entities and demonstration of their compliance with Section 2001, such as any use of funds to address required set aside of at least 20% for learning loss mitigation, including through afterschool, summer school, extended day/year programs, targeted to ESEA subgroups, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

Authorized by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund

## ESSER III Allocation

Gonzales ISD's allocation of ESSER III federal grant funds is \$4,147,823. There are a total of 28 allowable activities. Of this total allocation at least 20% (\$829,565) must be set-aside for learning loss mitigation. The funding plan described in this document includes a total of six (6) allowable activities. In the aggregate, the funding plan includes a total of \$1,451,738, or 35% of the total allocation to address learning loss. The remaining 65% will be used for other activities in an effort to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The funding plan includes planned expenditures over a 3-year period: 2020 -2021 through 2022-2023 with a carryover year of 2023-2024.

## Gonzales ISD Stakeholder Input

The District engaged stakeholders in an opportunity to provide meaningful consultation through online surveys regarding the ESSER III grant opportunity on May 28, 2021. The following were invited to participate in the survey:

- 1) Students
- 2) Parents and/or guardians
- 3) School district staff (campus, central, and special education administrations), teachers, other educators, and auxiliary staff.

4) Other stakeholders as designated in the ESSER III guidelines.

The Top 4 most identified areas include:

- 1) Academics
- 2) Social-Emotional
- 3) Mental Health
- 4) Extra/Co-Curricular

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

The Gonzales ISD Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan was initially developed during the summer of 2020 with stakeholder input. It has been continuously reviewed and revised as Texas Education Agency, JBSA and CDC guidance has changed safety protocols over the past year and a half. The safety and well-being of all staff and visitors are a priority for Gonzales ISD as the district welcomed all students and campus-based personnel back to our campuses for the 2020-2021 school year. Gonzales ISD schools will continue to monitor and update practices and protocols based on recommendations by state and local agencies, CDC, JBSA, and the Texas Education Agency. The goal is to collaboratively ensure that all students, employees, and visitors in district facilities remain safe and secure to the greatest extent possible.

## Instructional Continuity Plan

Gonzales ISD took a deep dive of the stakeholder input through multiple administration and planning meetings. The responses were review, and ranked by order of most choices or responses received and area of need based on the 2021 school year in house data. The survey data was analyzed by the following elements:

- 1) Top Student Issues
- 2) Biggest Challenges for Accelerated Learning
- 3) Most effective supportive strategies
- 4) Accelerated Learning considerations
- 5) Resources needed to align after school and school day
- 6) Needs of Student with Disabilities
- 7) Instructional Loss

Additional data reviewed included core subject area student performance measures, and class size configurations. Topics that were address were:

1. Strategies
2. Weakness
3. ESSER III Allowable Activities
4. Resources

## **ESSER III Allowable Program Activities**

There are twenty-eight (28) allowable program activities. Of the 28 activities, there are 8 that address strategies to mitigate learning loss. Another 8 that address strategies related to the safe return to in-person instruction. The remaining activities are generally related to addressing the needs of the students and staff as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is great flexibility in the use of the funds over a span of five (5) fiscal years from 2019-2020 (effective March 2020) through a roll-forward period of 2023-2024. The District has determined that it is in the best interests of the students to expend the funds in the current fiscal year, 2020-2021 through the 2022- 2023 fiscal year. In the event that 100% of the federal grant funds have not been spent, the District will request to extend the grant to through the roll-forward period of 2023-2024. The ESSER III Grant Application allows for amendments to the original grant application until July 5, 2023. As the District implements the grant activities and conducts ongoing planning, including review of stakeholder input, the District may amend the application to include additional allowable program activities.

## **ESSER III Funding Plan – Targeted 7 Activities**

The targeted six (8) program activities selected by the District leadership after reviewing stakeholder feedback and student academic needs at the end of the 2020-2021 school year are:

- 1) Addressing learning loss within the Special Education Population
- 2) Learning Loss to all special populations
- 3) Ensure learning will continue if closure is needed
- 4) Provide mental health services and supports
- 5) Supplemental afterschool and online learning opportunities with software subscriptions and additional distance learning courses
- 6) Implementing evidence based activities
- 7) Providing assistance to parents and students on effectively supporting students
- 8) Providing funds necessary to continuing to employ school staff.

## **Ongoing Planning & Feedback**

During the life of the ESSER III Grant, the District is required to continue to review the ESSER III Funding Plan and Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan. We seek the continuing feedback from our stakeholders to ensure that we meet academic and safety needs of our students. While we thank you for your feedback during the initial stakeholder input surveys, we request your continued feedback through upcoming surveys, focus group meetings, etc. on an ongoing basis.

## Review Planning meeting updates

After review from all stakeholders on November 18, 2021, no additional changes were needed in the areas of instructional supports. The idea of staff retention incentives were discussed and further action will take place if need after further discussion and board approval. A review meeting will be held in Jan to continue the discussion of the retention incentives.