

Gardner Public Schools



Gardner Public Schools

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Dear Gardner Public Schools Stakeholders:

Funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) has been allocated to the Gardner Public School District in the form of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds in the amount of \$5,966,598. The United States Department of Education (USED) is requiring two plans from all recipients of ESSER III funds:

- A plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services; and,
- A plan for the Use of ESSER III Funds.

The district was required to solicit input from a broad group of stakeholders and thoughtfully consider how to address the following:

- The district's prevention and mitigation strategies, including the extent to which the district has adopted CDC recommendations;
- How the district will use its 20% reservation of ESSER III funds to address loss of instructional time with evidence-based interventions;
- How the district will spend the remainder of its ESSER III funds for allowable expenditures and budget; and,
- How the use of ESSER III funds will respond to the academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of all students, especially those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including:
 - students from low-income families
 - students of color
 - English learners
 - students with disabilities
 - students experiencing homelessness
 - students in foster care
 - migratory students
 - students who are incarcerated
 - other underserved students.

Below, you will find the district's implementation plan directly from the ESSER III application submitted to and approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to my office directly.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Pellegrino
Superintendent

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Gardner

Plans for the Use of ESSER III Funds:

The United States Department of Education (USED) is requiring two plans from all recipients of ESSER III funds:

- 1) **A plan for the safe return to in-person instruction** and continuity of services
 The requirement for this plan is likely met by your **District Reopening Plan** submitted to DESE in August of 2020, along with any subsequent amendments (see Tab 3 Assurances). It will need to be revisited and revised as necessary every 6 months, including soliciting stakeholder input and considering changes to CDC guidance.
- 2) **A plan for the Use of ESSER III Funds**, based on broad stakeholder input, and addressing the following:
 - The district's **prevention and mitigation strategies**, including extent district has adopted CDC recommendations (**Step 4.4**)
 - How the district will use its **20% reservation of ESSER III funds to address loss of instructional time with evidence-based interventions (Step 4.2 and Tab 6, Budget)**
 - How the district will spend the remainder of its ESSER III funds for **allowable expenditures (Tab 5) and budget (Tab 6)**
 - How the use of ESSER III funds will respond to the **academic, social, emotional and mental health needs** of all students, especially **those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Tab 4.2, Tab 4.3)**, including:
 - students from low-income families
 - students of color
 - English learners
 - students with disabilities
 - students experiencing homelessness
 - students in foster care
 - migratory students
 - students who are incarcerated
 - other underserved students

This application, when fully and thoughtfully completed, along with your District Reopening Plans, will constitute the plans required by USED. These plans must be published on your website and must be accessible to families in a language they understand, either translated in writing or orally, as well as in an accessible format for those with disabilities.

You should expect that DESE will be collecting data and other information from you as a result of implementation of your plans for and use of ESSER funds.

ESSER III regulations require that the stakeholder groups below be meaningfully consulted as part of the planning process for use of ESSER III funds. Which of the following groups have you consulted with? (check all that apply)		If you have not yet consulted with this group in planning for use of ESSER III funds, when and how do you plan to get their input?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Families	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School and District administrators, including special education administrators	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School leaders	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teachers	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other educators	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School staff	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unions representing educators and school staff	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tribes*	N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations)*	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.*	

TRUE
 TRUE

*To the extent present in or served by the district

Evidence-Based Strategies, Interventions, and Supports:

Enhanced Core Instruction	Our district is using ESSER III funds for this strategy	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.
Expanding access to full-day, high-quality prekindergarten	Select	Select		
Purchasing and/or expanding use of high-quality, aligned instructional materials (any content area)	Select	Select		

Professional development for teachers and administrators re: culturally responsive teaching	Select	Select		
Screening assessments and associated professional development (e.g., early literacy screening)	Select	Select		
Expanding access to career-technical education (including "After Dark" district/vocational	Select	Select		
Extending the school day/year and prioritizing student access to additional time by student need	Select	Select		
Tutoring programs and support, including early literacy tutoring (including training)	Select	Select		
Developing or strengthening data cycles to facilitate and inform student learning and associated professional development and support personnel	Yes	Yes	MCAS, DIBELS, Linkit Benchmark Data, Formative Assessments	Data will be disaggregated by identified subgroups and used to inform tiered instruction and interventions. The district is addressing academic learning gaps between the aggregate and marginalized populations, specifically students with special needs, English learners, and students of color.
Early college programs, particularly those focused on students underrepresented in higher education	Yes	Select	Successful college course completion and enrollment trends	Enrollment and successful course completion will be disaggregated by identified subgroups. The district will provide equitable supports for all participants, especially students with special needs, English learners, and students of color.
Targeted Student Supports	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention
Developing or expanding high quality co-teaching and inclusion models for students with disabilities and associated professional development	Yes	Yes	MCAS, DIBELS, Linkit Benchmark Data, Formative Assessments	Data will be disaggregated by identified subgroups and used to inform tiered instruction and interventions. The district is addressing academic learning gaps between the aggregate and marginalized populations, specifically students with special needs, English learners, and students of color.
Acceleration academies (during school year vacations) and summer learning opportunities for	Select	Select		
Language support programs, including dual language and heritage language programs (students	Select	Select		
Community-based afterschool programs for parents, including citizenship and ESL classes	Select	Select		
Dropout prevention and recovery programs	Yes	Yes	Successful college course completion and promotion	Promotion to the next grade, graduation rates, and successful course completion will be disaggregated by identified subgroups. The district will provide equitable supports for all participants, especially students with special needs, English learners, and students of color.
Talent Development and Staffing	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention
Academic support staff, including academic coaches, interventionists, student teaching residency programs, paraprofessionals	Yes	Yes	MCAS, DIBELS, Linkit Benchmark Data	Data will be disaggregated by identified subgroups and used to inform tiered instruction and interventions. The district is addressing academic learning gaps between the aggregate and marginalized populations, specifically students with special needs, English learners, and students of color.
Diversifying the educator workforce through recruitment and retention strategies	Select	Select		
Strategies to staff hard-to-staff schools and positions with high-performing educators	Select	Select		
Increasing staff and opportunities for arts, enrichment, world languages, athletics, and elective	Select	Select		
Increasing high-quality common planning time for teachers and academic support staff	Yes	Yes	Implementation of tiered academic, social emotional and behavioral support systems.	Stipended teacher leaders will facilitate common planning time to address disproportionality in academic progress, attendance, and discipline.
Developing leadership pipeline programs for schools	Select	Select		
Labor-management partnerships to improve student performance	Select	Select		
Conditions for Student Success - Social/Emotional and Mental Health Supports	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention
Increasing personnel and services to support holistic student needs, including school guidance and adjustment counselors, nurses, psychologists, and/or social workers	Yes	Yes	Class grades and attendance of students receiving tier 2 and tier 3 behavioral supports.	Students in need of tier 2 and tier 3 behavioral supports are already at high risk of failing in school. The district mitigates individual challenges and challenges of circumstance by providing equitable services.
Building/strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations to increase	Select	Select		
Working with community-based organizations that provide enrichment during the school day	Select	Select		
Arranging for wraparound services to be provided at schools	Select	Select		
Engaging community partners to build capacity among educators and support personnel to	Select	Select		

Create transitional programs, partnering with community based organizations, for students with	Select	Select		
Parent-teacher home visiting programs to build positive relationships between home and school	Select	Select		
Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments	Select	Select		

Equitable Use of ESSER III Funds

How is your district taking educational equity into account when planning for expending your ESSER III funds?

The Gardner Public School District considers educational equity when making all decisions, big or small. The work being done in the district, including the district-wide implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports and distributed leadership models at all levels, informs the process through disaggregated data tracking and analysis to inform our supports, instruction, and interventions, and a common language from kindergarten through grade 12.

The specific allocation of funds for the ESSER III grant was designed considering feedback from community and district stakeholders from all backgrounds. The main priorities were student safety and addressing learning loss. While students are struggling academically, socially, emotionally and economically, the district used a holistic approach to allocate funding to all schools, with a particular focus on those equity gaps in our academic and social/emotional outcomes. These disparities were greatest in our elementary schools: Waterford Street School (K-1) and Elm Street School (2-4). This focus led the district to provide a significant amount of funding for paraprofessionals and tutors to ensure continued access to services in the classroom where students need it most.

In addition to these services, the district will utilize ESSER III funding to provide stipends to building teacher leaders who are committed to the multi-tiered system of supports during the implementation phase. The district is currently engaged in implementation of tier 1, and will focus on implementing tiers 2 and 3 with fidelity during the 2022-2023 school year and beyond. The ESSER III funding will also be used to support the use of Board Certified Behavior Analysts to lead this work in all buildings, in addition to stipends for a district-wide mental health advisory team. The district will also be utilizing some ESSER III funding to support the Early College Program and the Gateway to College dropout prevention program, as a way to support student learning recovery at the secondary-level.

CDC School Safety Recommendations

CDC Recommendation	Does your district have a policy or policies on this topic?	If "Yes," is it described in your District Reopening Plan?	If you have a policy but it is not described in your District Reopening Plan, please briefly describe here.
1 Universal and correct wearing	Yes	Yes	
2 Modifying facilities to allow for	Yes	Yes	
3 Handwashing and respiratory	Yes	Yes	
4 Cleaning and maintaining	Yes	Yes	
5 Contact tracing, isolation,	Yes	Yes	
6 Diagnostic and screening	Yes	Yes	
7 Efforts to provide vaccination	Yes	Yes	
8 Appropriate accommodations	Yes	Yes	
9 Coordination with state and	Yes	Yes	