

2021-24 American Rescue Plan

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

Hernando County School District ARP ESSER Plan,

Application and Assurances

**HERNANDO 027**

**Purpose**

Florida must subgrant not less than 90 percent of its total ARP ESSER allocation to local educational agencies (LEAs) (including charter schools that are LEAs) to help meet a wide range of needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic, including reopening schools safely, sustaining their safe operation, and addressing students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs resulting from the pandemic. The State must allocate these funds to LEAs on the basis of their respective shares of funds received under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020.

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to plan for the continued implementation of reopening and recovery through the utilization of the 2021-24 ARP ESSER and to assure federal requirements are met. Florida utilized the 2020-21 District Reopening Plan and the Spring 2021 Education Plan to respond to and mitigate the impact of the emergency and to promote the health, safety, and welfare of persons connected with Florida’s educational system.

The Department recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. In this document, districts will describe how they will support the development of high-quality plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives for the following student groups: students from low-income families, from each racial or ethnic background, by gender, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care, migratory students and other student groups.

**Directions**

Districts shall submit its ARP ESSER application to the Office of Grants Management via ShareFile **on or before November 12, 2021**. ShareFile access has been established for the ARP ESSER Lump Sum program for each LEA. The complete application shall include:

* LEA ARP ESSER Plan, Application and Assurances utilizing this template;
* DOE 100A Project Application Form; and
* DOE 101 Budget Narrative Form.

Each LEA developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return of in-person learning in the Fall of 2020. This was before the enactment of the ARP Act. This plan must be updated to address the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195. The requirements of the Interim Final Rule are summarized in Appendix A. Each LEA shall seek public comment on the updated plan and take such comments into account prior to the submission of the final plan to the Department. Updated plans must comply with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency action, or any agency regulation or rule. No later than 60 days from receipt of its DOE 200, Project Award Notice, each LEA shall email its updated final plan to recoveryplan@fldoe.org. The subject line of the email must include district name and Plan for the Safe Return of In-person Instruction. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.

**Part I: Implementation Plan**

**The LEA will submit an implementation plan, outlining planned activities for each of the following uses of funds under section 2001(e) of the ARP Act. The description must be adequate to ascertain that the proposed use of funds is necessary to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students.**

**Activities should be numbered consecutively. If the LEA does not plan any activities for one or more authorized uses, please indicate that there are no planned activities. School district LEAs shall include the activities identified for charter schools within the LEA, aggregated at the district/LEA level.**

**Activity 1**: **Addressing Learning Loss (at least 20% of total allocation).** Of the total amount allocated to an LEA, the LEA must reserve at least 20 percent of funds to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that those interventions respond to students’ social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care).

1. Seventeen (17) paraprofessionals will be hired for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year. This will allow for an additional paraprofessional at each elementary, middle, and K8 school to provide additional instructional supports in classrooms. Principals overwhelmingly indicated that this is a high priority to ensure that teachers and students have the additional support to meet the varied needs of the classrooms. Of the 546 stakeholders who submitted input, 88.2% indicated that hiring additional staff is a moderate to most important use of funds. Since the re-opening of schools, students have demonstrated a widened achievement gap, thus a need for more intensive supports in the daily classroom setting. At an estimated salary of $25,000/year, plus associated fringe benefits, the total cost of this activity is $1,280,525.00.
2. Substitutes for the seventeen paraprofessionals are budgeted at $110/day for up to 10 days per year (20 days total) for each staff member. Total cost: $37,400
3. Three (3) ESE staffing specialists and one (1) Behavior Analyst will be hired for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. This will ensure an ESE staffing specialist is available at each school to meet the increased needs of the SWD population that have been exacerbated by the disruptive nature of the pandemic. The addition of a behavior analyst will allow for more staff to be available at the schools with the greatest behavioral needs, specifically schools with self-contained EBD classrooms. Of the 546 stakeholders who submitted input, 88.2% indicated that hiring additional staff is a moderate to most important use of funds. Staffing specialists and behavior analysts are eligible for a critical shortage supplement of $3,955/year. At an estimated annual salary of $55,750, plus an advanced degree ($2,500), critical shortage supplement ($3,955), and associated fringe benefits, the total cost of this activity is $665,359.78.00.
4. Seventeen (17) teachers on assignment for MTSS will be hired, so that each elementary, middle, and K-8 school has a dedicated additional staff member to provide multi-tiered supports to students in need of academic interventions to close their achievement gaps. In early 2020, the schools in Hernando County closed to protect the students, teachers, and community from the COVID-19 pandemic. The following year, there were various methods of learning taking place: virtual, hybrid, and in person, along with frequent gaps in instruction because of exposure to COVID-19. Due to all of these changes for students, there has been an increase in the number of students scoring below level on diagnostic assessments. Historically the number of students in kindergarten through eighth grade scoring two or more grade levels below in math and reading has been at 13-14%. This year those numbers have risen to almost double at 25% of the students placing two or more grade levels below. In addition, the students scoring one grade level below has increased 12% in reading and 14% in math when compared to the 2019 fall diagnostic. Due to the increase in students placing below level, the need for MTSS tiered interventions is more important than ever to help fill the gaps in learning to bring the student back up to grade level proficiency. The amount of time that it takes to properly analyze data, match the appropriate intervention to a student’s need and facilitate problem-solving meetings that include all stakeholders is significantly more than in years past. Of the 546 stakeholders who submitted input, 88.2% indicated that hiring additional staff is a moderate to most important use of funds. These additional staff will be hired for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. At an estimated annual salary of $55,750, plus an advanced degree ($2,500) and associated fringe benefits, the total cost of this activity is $ 2,667,083.42.
5. Six (6) instructional coaches will be hired for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years; one coach will be placed at each of the five high schools, and one elementary coach will be district-based. Principals have expressed a need for additional instructional coaching supports for classroom teachers to ensure the varied needs of the students are met; instructional coaches will provide classroom teachers with evidenced-based interventional supports to close learning gaps through instructional best practices. Of the 546 stakeholders who submitted input, 88.2% indicated that hiring additional staff is a moderate to most important use of funds. At an estimated annual salary of $55,750, plus an advanced degree ($2,500) and associated fringe benefits, the total cost of this activity is $941,323.50.
6. To meet the increased needs of students with disabilities and students suffering from behavioral and/or emotional challenges, training for up to ten (10) ESE paraprofessionals to receive certification as Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) will be provided at their hourly rate ($20/hr x 40 hours x 10 staff). Stakeholder input includes 81.4% of respondents sharing this as a moderate to most important use of funds. This activity includes funds for a Behavior Analyst to administer the training ($35/hr x 40 hours). Once certified as RBTs, these paraprofessionals will receive four hours per week of additional duty at their hourly rate for additional work on paperwork related to Medicaid billing for services rendered. Total cost: $82,175.50
7. Laptop computers for the twenty-seven (27) grant-funded instructional staff will be purchased. Total cost: $24,300.
8. The district-based instructional coach (Item 6) and the Behavior Analyst (Item 3) will be traveling between various schools within the county, and therefore will need to be reimbursed for this in-county travel. Total cost: $4,000.00.
9. Due to the varied needs of students and the increase in students needing tiered instructional supports, coupled with the adoption of Florida’s new BEST Standards, instructional staff need additional time to plan standards-aligned instruction that meets the need of all students. Additional duty pay, at the hourly rate of each teacher, will be offered for facilitated lesson planning. Close to eighty-two percent (81.7%) of stakeholders ranked this activity as a moderate to most important use of funds. Salary and fringe benefits total $183,975.00.

1. Hernando County Schools currently offer multiple after-school extended learning opportunities that some students are unable to access due to lack of transportation home. Stakeholder input included multiple parent/family comments requesting transportation for extended learning, and site-based administrators have echoed that need. To ensure that the students who are in need of extended learning opportunities have all barriers to access removed, a transportation activity bus driver additional salary, fringe benefits, and the bus fuel will be funded. Total cost: $166,987.50.
2. Mathematics textbooks and ancillary instructional materials that are aligned to the new BEST Standards will be adopted to ensure that all students have access to high-quality, standards-aligned textbooks. Mathematics achievement, as measured by proficiency levels, have dropped in grades 3-8 by 8% over the past two school years; proficiency in Algebra decreased by 3%; and proficiency in Geometry decreased by 7%. Of stakeholders who responded, 85.5% indicated funding this adoption is moderately to most important. The mathematics textbook purchase will allow for a district-wide adoption of ample materials for all students. Total cost: $3,500,000.00.
3. A summer recovery program will be funded in the summer of 2024. This program will be an opportunity for students to complete grade and/or credit recovery and receive additional instructional supports as needed. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of stakeholders ranked this activity as a moderately to most important use of ESSER funds. The total cost of additional duty and associated fringe benefits for instructional and non-instructional staff is $183,975.00.
4. The Hernando County School District offers an Extended School Year for students with disabilities each year. The summer 2024 ESY program will be funded through ESSER. The total cost of salary, fringe benefits, materials, and transportation is $276,857.54.
5. Of the 546 stakeholders consulted, 90.3% indicated that the provision of access to tutoring and/or homework help services is moderately to most important as a use of ESSER funds. To that end, the district will fund two years of a virtual tutoring subscription for students. This is an additional avenue for students in grades 5-12 to access tutors after school and on the weekends. Stakeholder comments also included support for this initiative, particularly for families unable to commit to in-person extended learning opportunities offered at school sites. Total cost: $1,237,400.00.
6. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Elementary School will hire a daily extended day paraprofessional tutor to address learning loss that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. This position, inclusive of fringe benefits, will be for half of the 2021-22 school year ($15,400), and for the 2022-23 ($30,800) and 2023-24 ($30,800) school years. Thirty-six percent (36%) of GCE charter school stakeholders ranked extended learning as the most important use of funds. Total cost: $77,000.00.
7. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will fund after-school and summer learning opportunities for their students, and 63% of B.E.S.T. stakeholders ranked these activities as an important use of funds to address learning losses that have widened due to the pandemic. Total cost: $15,000.00.
8. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will also purchase online learning programs such as iXL and/or iReady, to further address the learning losses of students. Of stakeholders consulted, 79% shared that an important use of funds is ensuring students have access to high-quality instructional materials. Total cost: $20,000.00.
9. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will address learning loss through an extended day program for the remainder of the 21-22 school year and for the 22-23 and 23-24 school years. Thirty-six percent (36%) of GCA charter school stakeholders ranked extended learning as the most important use of funds. Total cost of salary and fringe benefits for this activity: $17,600.00.
10. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will fund an intensive summer learning program to meet the needs of students who have experienced a gap in their achievement. Thirty-six percent (36%) of GCA charter school stakeholders ranked extended learning as the most important use of funds. Total cost of this additional salary for summer learning: $8,000.00.
11. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will add one Field Activity teacher to support the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students at $47,000 plus fringe benefits per year for two and one half years (2021-22 through 2023-24). Thirty-six percent (36%) of GCA charter school stakeholders ranked extended learning as the most important use of funds. Total cost: $130,625.00.

**Activity 2** (**A**) **Any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.**

1. Students now have access to a multitude of learning programs and a significant amount of digital content. To assist in the streamlining of programs through a single-sign on (SSO) that not only works across multiple devices but also offers analytics such as usage (by program, by location, and by device), that provides a high level of cybersecurity to protect sensitive data, and that has the capability to provide a parent portal for access, a three-year subscription to ClassLink will be purchased. Of the 546 stakeholders consulted, 79.3% ranked the purchase of an SSO as a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost, including initial set-up: $228,000.00.
2. In consultation with stakeholders, the purchase of an accessible student data and communication portal, which includes parental engagement features for communication between school and home, was deemed moderately to most important by 80.6% of respondents. School Status, a data analytics and assessment platform, allows for all student data (local and state assessments, attendance, behavior) to be in one system. This gives staff the ability to see the whole picture of each student and make data-informed decisions to best meet the needs of all students. Total cost of a three-year online subscription to School Status: $288,000.00.
3. With the requirements for frequent stakeholder input and meaningful consultation, which includes in-person workshops that are also streamed online and to the local cable channel, the video projection systems in the District’s main Board meeting room need to be upgraded. This room is also where the district holds the Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council meetings, Achievement Gap Committee meetings, and professional development. The room is in need of two new projectors ($3,199 each), a video transmission kit ($3,700), and related batteries, chargers, power supply and connection cords. Total cost of equipment, supplies, and applicable shipping: $11,976.62.

**Activity 2** (B) **Any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

1. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Elementary will utilize funds to support IDEA by creating a full-time Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teaching position. Thirty percent of stakeholders ranked this as an important use of funds. This will be for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year, and the entirety of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Total cost of salary and fringe benefits: $138,001.93.
2. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will utilize funds to support IDEA by hiring a full-time ESE teacher for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year and the entirety of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Thirty percent of stakeholders surveyed ranked this as an important use of funds. Total salary and fringe benefits: $151,250.00.

**Activity 2** (C) **Any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** (D) **Any activity authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** (E) **Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** (F) **Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.**

1. To assist the students experiencing homelessness, the District will utilize ESSER funds for a subscription to Connecting People to Resources (CPR^3), which provides use of an all-in-one device that helps students experiencing homelessness access their educational resources. The devices have 5G internet access, and can be customized with local apps for direct connection to resources (local food pantries, SNAP, crisis hotlines, school and district-specific applications, et cetera). The devices can also be used for emergency calls, text communications with schools, and have a panic button feature in case of an emergency to deploy local emergency services to their location. Stakeholder input indicates that 82.2% find this to be a moderately to most important use of funds. The subscription is $32.50/per student, per month until September 2024. Total cost: $62,400.00.
2. To assist the students experiencing homelessness, transportation services will be contracted to ensure the students’ attendance is consistent and that no further loss of learning is experienced due to their loss of permanent housing. Of stakeholders responding, 87.2% ranked this activity as a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost: $250,000.00.

**Activity 2** (G) **Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** (H) **Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** (I) **Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2** **(J**) **Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State,**

**and local requirements.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2(K) Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.**

1. To meet the needs of all students and ensure that every learner has access to a device, student computers will be purchased to bring the District to a 1:1 student-to-device ratio. Stakeholder input indicates that 83.6% of respondents believe this is a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost: $7,653,460.00.
2. The District will purchase Audio Enhancements for classrooms to improve student achievement through increased focus, attention, and classroom management. These systems include a wearable microphone for the teacher that is transmitted through classroom speakers, so all students can always hear their teacher, no matter where the teacher is in the room. This aids in less teacher repetition, thus increasing actual instructional time. Recapturing lost instructional time due to the pandemic is a vital necessity, and so too is protecting the current instructional minutes. With an increase in the overall quality of sound comes an increase in achievement and closing of learning gaps. The system also includes cameras for instructional use that supports blended technology (teachers can use the cameras to record their lessons for absent students, and can also use them as document cameras by zooming in to the item for projection); enhanced intercom systems to reduce lost instructional time, and safety features to assist in providing the safest learning environment for students. These systems allow for dismissal bells, alerts, and other intercom functions be set to particular zones so as to decrease instructional interruptions. The teacher microphones are equipped with a panic button that can alert administration and turn on the intercom and/or camera remotely to assess any potential threat. Seventy-four percent of stakeholders ranked this activity as moderately to most important. Cost includes equipment and required installation in classrooms: $4,302,850.00.
3. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will purchase student devices to ensure their school is at a 1:1 student to device ratio. Sixty-two percent of their stakeholders indicated that funds should be spent on technology purchases. Total cost: $55,000.00.
4. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will purchase mobile device carts for their student devices. Total cost: $15,000.00.
5. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will purchase mobile hotspots for students to have internet access outside of the school building. Many students reside in areas without adequate internet service; in the event of school closures, those students cannot access online coursework and maintain regular and substantive contact with their instructors. Sixty-two percent of stakeholders indicated that the school should utilize ESSER funds for connectivity, hardware, and/or software. Total cost: $15,000.00.
6. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Elementary will utilize funds in this activity to purchase a new server, allowing for student connection to the school intranet for regular and substantive interaction between the students and their instructors. Forty-six percent of GCES stakeholders indicated that expenditures for technology, including connectivity, were an important use of funds. This hardware purchase totals $5.700.00.
7. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will purchase educational technology for students to aid in the regular and substantive education. Obsolescence resistant computer stations (two student learning labs at 30 student stations per lab, and at $1,900 per station, to serve all 235 students) totaling $114,000.
8. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will purchase obsolescence resistant teacher computer stations (15 teacher stations at $1,900 per station) totaling $28,500.00.
9. (Charter Allocation) Gulf Coast Academy will purchase a server to handle the new student and teacher computer stations. Total cost of server station: $6,792.54.

**Activity 2(L) Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence-based full-service community schools.**

1. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will purchase SEL curriculum for students. Sixty-eight percent of B.E.S.T. Academy stakeholders surveyed indicated that providing social emotional learning opportunities such as counseling, mental health, and wellness resources for students staff and families is an important use of funds. Total cost: $23,294.91.

**Activity 2(M) Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2(N) Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by—**

**(i) administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess students’ academic progress and assist educators in meeting students’ academic needs, including through differentiating instruction;**

**(ii) implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students;**

**(iii) providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; and**

**(iv) tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2(O) School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Activity 2(P) Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and nonmechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.**

1. The District will perform ductwork renovations to improve the indoor air quality through air filtration in schools and district offices. Of the stakeholders consulted, 84.8% ranked the improvement of indoor air quality in buildings as a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost: $1,544,430.00.
2. District school busses will be fitted with air purification systems to improve the filtering and purification of the existing air conditioning systems. Stakeholder responses indicated 75.4% find this to be a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost: $350,000.00.
3. To improve the efficiency of HVAC systems and enable better air filtration and airflow in building, the District will purchase HVAC controls ($1,938,000), and will replace components within some HVAC systems ($1,803,360). The District will also perform a total HVAC replacement at two schools with aged systems that can no longer be repaired for optimal usage; these units have reached the end of their lifecycle ($10,364,210). Stakeholder responses showed 88.4% ranking this activity as a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost: $14,105,570.00.

**Activity 2(Q) Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent possible and not inconsistent with state law, policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.**

1. (Charter Allocation) B.E.S.T. Academy will fund contracted cleaning services to ensure the sanitation of the school campus is completed regularly. Total cost: $31,335.76.

**Activity 2(R) Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.**

1. The District will set aside funds for a potential second round of premium pay for staff not included in the Governor’s plan for a second round of disaster relief payments to teachers and principals. In the event the Governor’s second round of disaster relief payments are paid to some staff, the District will allocate the same dollar amount to all staff not included in the state payment. Total cost: $2,500,000.00.
2. Retention bonuses of $650 will be paid at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to all instructional staff who complete the school year in Hernando County Schools. For instructional staff who work one day more than half the year, the full $650 will be paid and those teachers who do not work one day more than half the year will receive half, or $325. Teachers must work until the last day of their contract in order to receive the bonus. Teachers on leave for the entire year will not qualify for the bonus. As a direct result of the pandemic, instructional staff shortages have reached higher levels than in previous years. This retention bonus incentivizes instructional staff to maintain employment, thus providing continuity of services to all students. Stakeholder responses indicated that 86.3% believe this to be a moderate to most important use of funds. Total cost, including fringe benefits: $1,173,076.00.

**Activity 2 (S) Administration. LEAs may take reasonable and necessary administrative costs, to include direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs may be taken up to the negotiated, unrestricted indirect cost rate. However, to ensure that the total administrative costs are reasonable, the total direct and indirect costs may not exceed five percent (5%) of the LEA’s total award.**

No activities planned at this time.

**Part II: Ensuring Effectiveness of Interventions**

**Please describe how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.** **In your response, please include a description of interventions and strategies that are aligned to the LEA’s data (disaggregated by subgroup), and describe how the LEA will measure the effectiveness of the selected interventions.**

The 2020-21 subgroup achievement gap data for Hernando County Schools is as follows:

Black/African American

ELA: 20%

Math: 25%

Science: 22%

Social Studies: 18%

English Language Learners

ELA: 26%

Math: 21%

Science: 29%

Social Studies: 30%

Students with Disabilities:

ELA: 37%

Math: 32%

Science: 37%

Social Studies: 41%

Economically Disadvantaged:

ELA: 17%

Math: 18%

Science: 19%

Social Studies: 10%

The student population in the Hernando County School District continues to grow by several hundred students per year. As more students enter our school district, particularly students coming from areas where schools remained closed for longer than Florida school districts, gaps in learning are becoming more apparent. Students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 need additional supports for not only academics, but also for their social and emotional well-being. Activities to be funded through ESSER are focused on addressing the academic, social, emotional, and mental health of all students, with a particular focus on the subgroups with the largest achievement gap—most notably across the district (as detailed above), students with disabilities.

To address the achievement gaps at each site, with a particular emphasis on the subgroups falling below the Federal Index, paraprofessionals will be hired for each elementary, middle, and K8 school. These staff will work with students, under the direction of a teacher, to provide the additional classroom supports necessary to address the learning gaps. The paraprofessionals will be evaluated by their site administrator(s), and effectiveness of this intervention will be measured by the learning gains and/or proficiency measures of students with whom the paraprofessionals work.

The addition of ESE staffing specialists will reduce the caseload of staffing specialists in schools. At present, 15% of the Hernando School District student population has been identified as students with disabilities. With the increase in the SWD population, coupled with the significance of the achievement gap across the district for this subgroup, there is a need for additional staff to provide timely interventions and meet the requirements of each students’ IEP. This activity will be evaluated for effectiveness by the decrease in overall caseloads of all ESE staffing specialists. The addition of one Behavior Analyst will also assist with the increase in social, emotional, and mental health referrals for service. The extended impact of school closures, disrupted learning due to quarantines, and a potential lack of supports in the home environment have left many of the most vulnerable students in need of intensive support from an RtI perspective. The Behavior Analyst position will be evaluated by the Student Services department, and effectiveness will be measured by the decrease in caseloads of all current analysts, thus allowing them more time to effectively meet the complex needs of all referred students.

Seventeen (17) teachers on assignment for MTSS will be hired, so that each elementary, middle, and K-8 school has an additional dedicated staff member to provide multi-tiered supports to students in need of academic interventions to close their achievement gaps. In early 2020, the schools in Hernando County closed to protect the students, teachers, and community from the COVID-19 pandemic. The following year, there were various methods of learning taking place: virtual, hybrid, and in person, along with frequent gaps in instruction because of exposure to COVID-19. Due to all of these changes for students, there has been an increase in the number of students scoring below level on diagnostic assessments. Historically, the number of students in kindergarten through eighth grade scoring two or more grade levels below in math and reading has been at 13-14%. This year those numbers have risen to almost double at 25% of the students placing two or more grade levels below. In addition, the students scoring one grade level below has increased 12% in reading and 14% in math when compared to the 2019 fall diagnostic. Due to the increase in students placing below level, the need for MTSS tiered interventions is more important than ever to help fill the gaps in learning to bring the students back up to grade level proficiency. The amount of time that it takes to properly analyze data, match the appropriate intervention to a student’s need and facilitate problem-solving meetings that include all stakeholders is significantly more than in years past. Effectiveness of the positions will be measured through the learning gains of the lowest quartile of students at each site. ) The District MTSS Coordinator will support this work.

The staff will be evaluated by their site administrator(s).

Each high school will hire one instructional coach, and there will be one district-based mathematics coach hired using these funds. Currently, the concentration of instructional coaches exists at the elementary and middle level. High schools, however, are not exempt from the learning gaps among students; indeed, principals have expressed a need for additional instructional coaching supports for classroom teachers to ensure the varied needs of the students are met. Instructional coaches will provide classroom teachers with evidenced-based interventional supports to close learning gaps through instructional best practices. Each coach will be evaluated by their site-specific administrator(s). They will also work with other district coaches under the direction of the Supervisor of K-12 ELA and Supervisor of Secondary Programs to align their work and ensure a collaborative, district-wide approach to instructional coaching and supports. Effectiveness of this coaching can be measured through the evaluation growth of the assigned teachers through: evidence of growth in assessment literacy (use of data, SWAP, tiered instruction, scaffolds); lesson planning (lesson plans and components); student achievement and growth (iReady AP2 and AP3, MAP, 9-week examinations, progress monitoring, EOCs and other standardized assessments).

To meet the increased needs of students with disabilities and students suffering from behavioral and/or emotional challenges, training for up to ten (10) ESE paraprofessionals to receive certification as Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) will be offered. With 15% of the total student population being identified as SWD, coupled with the largest achievement gap in the District being between disabled and their non-disabled peers, it is imperative that the staff working with this vulnerable population, many of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, receive professional development in best practice for meeting the unique needs of this group of learners. Paraprofessionals rarely have an opportunity for specialized training; this opportunity to be trained to become certified registered behavior technicians will give staff a toolbox of strategies for de-escalating behaviors that impede academic progress. The effectiveness of this activity will be measured through an improvement to RtI-B data and learning gains for students with whom these trained paraprofessionals will work. A behavior analyst will oversee this work, and the paraprofessionals will be evaluated by their site administrator(s).

The facilitated lesson planning activity being funded is due to the varied needs of students and the increase in students needing tiered instructional supports, coupled with the adoption of Florida’s new BEST Standards; instructional staff need additional time to plan standards-aligned instruction that includes differentiation, scaffolds, and tiered supports. Teachers who participate in this additional duty for lesson planning will produce plans that include data-driven and evidence-based instructional practices designed to close learning gaps. This will also allow teachers time to collaborate, which is particularly necessary for general education teachers and ESE inclusion teachers to ensure that the appropriate accommodations are provided for students with disabilities. Effectiveness of this activity will be evaluated based on the creation and implementation of comprehensive, standards-based lesson plans that lead to increased achievement as measured through progress monitoring of students.

Hernando County Schools currently offer multiple after-school extended learning opportunities that some students are unable to access due to lack of transportation home. Stakeholder input included multiple parent/family comments requesting transportation for extended learning, and site-based administrators have echoed that need. To ensure that the students who are in need of extended learning opportunities, especially economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students experiencing homelessness have all barriers to access removed, an activity bus will be utilized for extended-learning transportation. The effectiveness of this strategy will be measured through student attendance in extended-learning programs.

Mathematics textbooks and ancillary instructional materials that are aligned to the new BEST Standards will be adopted to ensure that all students have access to high-quality, standards-aligned textbooks. Mathematics achievement, as measured by proficiency levels, have dropped in grades 3-8 by 8% over the past two school years; proficiency in Algebra decreased by 3%; and proficiency in Geometry decreased by 7%. The mathematics textbook purchase will allow for a district-wide adoption of ample materials for all students. Measures of effectiveness include the development of lesson planning, increase in collaboration amongst teachers with materials, and observational use of ancillary materials.

A summer recovery program will be an opportunity for students to complete grade and/or credit recovery and receive additional instructional supports as needed. Students in need of this additional instruction, particularly those students for whom large learning gaps exist (Black/African American, SWD, ELL, ED, and students experiencing homelessness) will be invited to these summer recovery programs to assist in getting the learners as close to, or to, grade level prior to the start of the following year. The effectiveness of this intervention will be measured by the attendance in the program, and the percentage of students participating who have a positive program-specific outcome (for example, credit recovery program success would be measured by the number of credits earned vs. attempted).

Extended School Year for students with disabilities is offered each summer if data indicates that the student regresses over school breaks. These regressions in performance are documented, and attendance at ESY is recommended, on the IEP. Effectiveness of the program is measured through demonstrable lack of regression at the beginning of the next school year.

Virtual tutoring services for students is an intervention that is targeted at students in grades 5-12 for whom access to tutoring may be limited, but for whom there is a need for additional supports. Students in all subgroups can benefit from access to virtual tutoring, and students from households where there is not an adult to assist with homework and studies may benefit more from this activity. Also, students experiencing homelessness are particularly in need of virtual access to tutoring. The tutoring platform can provide data analytics to teachers and administrators, thus allowing effectiveness to be tracked by individual student performance in the content area(s) for which the student seeks virtual assistance.

The number of students experiencing homelessness has increased; in December of 2020, 414 students were identified as qualifying under the McKinney-Vento Act; this month (December, 2021), 556 students qualify under McKinney-Vento. This increase in students experiencing homelessness must be addressed to ensure that students and families in transition are not encountering barriers to a free and appropriate public education. The inclusion of transportation services for these students will assist in the provision of immediate transportation upon identification, as the District is experiencing a shortage of bus drivers for regular school bus routes. Student attendance will be the measure of the effectiveness of this intervention. The device subscription for students and families in transition will be measured for effectiveness by the percentage of devices loaned being utilized for educational purposes (accessing educational applications, use for communication between the school and family) and for emergency purposes (access to community resources, communications with emergency services).

**Part III LEA Plan for Safe Return of In-Person Instruction**

Each LEA developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return of in-person learning in the Fall of 2020. This was before the enactment of the ARP Act. This plan must be updated to address the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195. The Interim Final Rule “does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.” 88 FR at 21200. Any updated LEA plan must be consistent with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency order, or any agency regulation or rule. Note specifically that LEA policies must comply with section 381.00316, Florida Statutes, and that any policies implemented after August 9, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21 -12, F.A.C., and any policies implemented after September 22, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21-15, F.A.C.

Each LEA must seek public comment on the plan and take such comments into account prior to submission of the final plan to the Department within 60 days of the award. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this updated plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.

[x] By checking this box, the LEA acknowledges the requirement that each LEA shall update its Plan for Safe Return of In-Person Instruction to reflect the requirements stated above, shall seek public comment on the updated plan and take such comments into account prior to the submission of the final plan to the Department within 60 days of the award. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this updated plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.

**Part IV: Assurances**

 **The district must agree to ALL of the assurances by checking the corresponding boxes.**

[x]  **Assurance 1: LEA Periodic Plan Update with Public Comment.**  As required in the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195, the LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months, review and as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account. If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations. Significantly, the Interim Final Rule “does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.” 88 FR at 21200. Any updated LEA plan must be consistent with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency order, or any agency regulation or rule. Specifically, LEA policies must comply with section 381.00316, Florida Statutes, and any policies implemented after August 9, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21 -12, F.A.C., and any policies implemented after September 22, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21-15, F.A.C.

[x]  **Assurance 2: Continue progress monitoring and interventions.** The district agrees to provide robust progress monitoring and requisite interventions must be extended to all students with tiered support for students who are performing below grade level and are not making adequate progress. Students who are receiving instruction through innovative teaching methods must transition to another teaching method if they fail to make adequate progress. The district agrees to provide monthly progress monitoring reports to parent/guardians for students identified as performing below grade level and/or demonstrating decline on the district’s progress monitoring system.

[x]  **Assurance 3: Allowable Uses of Funds.** The LEA will use funds for activities allowable under section 2001(e) of the CRRSA Act.

[x]  **Assurance 4: Maintenance of Equity.** The LEA will comply with all requirements relating to Maintenance of Equity, in accordance with section 2004(c) of the ARP Act.

[x]  **Assurance 5: Reporting.** The LEA will comply with all reporting requirements, and submit required reports to the Florida Department of Education at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the department may subsequently require.

[x]  **Assurance 6: Audits, Inspections or Examinations.** The LEA will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Auditor General; (ii) the Department and/or its Inspector General; or (iii) any other federal or state agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.

**Acknowledgement**

Local Educational Agency Chief Executive Officer or Authorized Representative

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| **Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)** |
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