

LEA ARP ESSER Plan
Giles County Public Schools
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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**. Giles County Public Schools (GCPS) has been awarded \$3,628,017.24 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II (Division Supt.) or Mrs. Lisa Mustain (Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Inst.).

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. Giles County Public Schools will use approximately \$300,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

Moving forward, GCPS will be operating on a regular 5 day/week in-person instructional model. This schedule will follow the normal schedule that we operated under prior to the pandemic. We will continue to monitor updated information that is received from VDOE, CDC, and VDH and make sure that we are aligned with the CDC and VDH guidelines in place at that time.

In addition, GCPS will continue to monitor the necessity for each of the following mitigation strategies and implement them as appropriate:

- Universal and correct wearing of masks – GCPS ordered face coverings for students and staff for the 2020-21 SY. They were provided to them to use during the 2020-21 SY and were used as a mitigation strategy when 6 ft. of physical distancing wasn't possible. We will monitor the current situation and information received from CDC, VDH, and DOE regarding masking and will make appropriate decisions at that time.
- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding) – GCPS began the school year on a Hybrid schedule with students staying within their room for instruction. As we transitioned to more students in person, computer labs or gym space were utilized to help create spaces that would allow classes to have at least 3 ft. of physical distancing with universal masking at the time. In addition, schools added lunch shifts to assist with physical distancing, boxes were utilized to pack lunches to make them easier to take back to classrooms, and tables and chairs were purchased to assist with physical distancing. We will monitor the current situation prior to the school year starting

and will determine whether other items need to be purchased to assist meeting any physical distancing requirements that may be in place.

- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette – signage was placed within all schools and teachers stressed the importance of washing hands and appropriate respiratory etiquette (i.e. coughing/sneezing into their bent elbow). This will continue to be stressed as we move into a new school year.
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation – GCPS purchased adequate cleaning supplies to clean school facilities, buses, and frequently touched surfaces. GHS received a grant from Giles Carillion Hospital to purchase room air purifiers. In addition, hand sanitizer was purchased and placed within each classroom and on buses. We also installed touchless water fountains throughout the schools prior to reopening. We are looking into renovations to our HVAC systems at some of our facilities to help update and improve air circulation/ventilation within those facilities. We will continue to purchase hand sanitizer/sanitizing wipes for our schools to utilize during the school year.
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments – GCPS had designated an isolation area within each of the schools when someone was ill. In addition, GCPS contacted the local health department to work with them in the event contact tracing was necessary and to determine the appropriate quarantine periods for individuals who tested positive or those that were exposed. Teacher Assistants rode the bus to take temperatures of students and monitor mask wearing for those riding the bus. There also were isolation seats on the bus designated for those students who had a temperature. We will continue to monitor situations and make appropriate decisions at that time.
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities – GCPS worked with Giles Carillion Clinic to offer vaccinations to staff members. In addition, GCPS has worked with, and will continue to work with, our local health department to schedule opportunities for our students to be vaccinated.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies – GCPS followed similar mitigation strategies.
- Coordination with state and local health officials – GCPS is constantly in contact with our local health department representatives to ask questions about updated guidelines and to ensure that we are appropriately following them when notified. In addition, we will continue to work with them to provide the safest learning environment for both our students and staff moving into a new school year.
- GCPS has also completed a form for the Va. Dept. of Education to let them know that we would be interested in participating in the ViSSTA (Va. School Screening Testing for Assurance) program for the upcoming school year. This is a collaboration between DOE and VDH to launch a new COVID-19 testing program that could serve as another mitigation strategy for our school divisions for the new school year. This would be a voluntary testing program for students and/or staff at participating schools and would operate under the Pooled testing model.

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 afterschool programs, or

extended school year programs. Giles County Public Schools will use approximately \$725,603.45 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

GCPS will hold a Summer Opportunity for Academic Recovery (SOAR) program during the Summer of 2021, the Summer of 2022, and the Summer of 2023 at each of our school sites. The purpose of the SOAR program will be to provide those students that have been identified as needing additional support, based on the previous school year, the opportunity to come to school for a specified period of time (e.g. – June 14, 2021 to July 22, 2021 from 9:00 to 1:00 Monday through Thursday of each week) and receive instruction in Reading and Mathematics to help prepare them for the next school year. In addition, GCPS will post and hire 3 new Reading Specialist positions for the Elem./Middle schools. The purpose of these positions will be to assist their school staff with reading instruction for their students and to help the student's literacy preparation as we move forward. These positions will be for the time period of this funding as well, with the goal of moving them into the budget on a permanent basis. Both of these items are intended to help the students make up for the instructional time that was lost due to the pandemic. Furthermore, we will continue to evaluate throughout the year the progress of our students and make determinations on whether additional after school support/tutoring, as well as future Summer programs, will be necessary.

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. Giles County Public Schools will use approximately \$2,505,413.79 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

GCPS will work with an architect that they have under contract to design projects that will improve the indoor air quality within our school buildings. This will be achieved through the replacement of roofs on school facilities and through the upgrade of the HVAC systems within the school buildings. This upgrade will help improve the indoor air quality within the buildings, thus helping to reduce the transmission of the virus and reduce exposure to other health hazards. As these upgrades are finalized, additional information will be shared.

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

GCPS will provide digital literacy training for families unfamiliar with the digital technology that their child is using and/or a WIFI device that will provide an internet connection for their child that is adequate for distance learning at home. GCPS will provide students with wrap-around services to support their well-being, including food security, physical and mental health services, and basic student and family needs.

GCPS will re-engage families of children with disabilities, ages birth through 5, who chose to virtually receive special education services during the pandemic. Outreach programs to re-engage and support older/high school/transition age students who left school or aged out, as well as providing access to social-emotional/mental health services and tutoring supports, as well as compensatory services for learning recovery for students who missed special education and related services during the pandemic.

GCPS will provide principals and other school leaders with the necessary resources to address the needs within their individual schools. Training/Professional Development for GCPS staff will be provided on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases. In addition, supplies will be purchased to sanitize and clean the GCPS facilities. Furthermore, GCPS will pursue school facility repairs and improvements to assist schools in reducing the risk of virus transmission.

GCPS has planned for and implemented activities for the 2021 Summer that includes providing classroom instruction or online tutoring during the summer months to address learning loss for our students, as well as addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, and children/youth in foster care. As part of this, GCPS will use high quality assessments that are valid and reliable to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs.

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Giles County Public Schools 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 – A draft copy of this plan will be shared with school administrators. They will be asked to share it with staff and request feedback. We will also share this with our SB members for their review as well.
- 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 – This will be shared with our Director of Sp. Ed. and she will be asked to gather feedback from our Sp. Ed. Advisory committee; and
- By providing the public the opportunity to provide input by posting a draft copy of this plan on our website and instruct anyone with comments to share them with Amanda Tickle and they will be considered for the final plan.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

Giles County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at sbo.gilesk12.org;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact GCPS 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 Amanda Tickle or Amy Wheeler at (540) 921-1421.