

Pittsville School District
ESSER III LEA Plan Narrative

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) was passed in March 2021 and authorized the ESSER III Grant Program. ESSER III provides additional non-recurring funds to Local Education Agency's (LEA) to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

The district ESSER III Planning group has been meeting since March, 2020 with the purpose of devising and adapting plans in the event of disruptions in our ability to deliver onsite instruction to all of our students due to mandates and health concerns related to COVID-19.

Rodney Figueroa – Superintendent

Pam Tesch – Director of Business Services

Matt Sherwood – Director of Special Education and Student Services

Dan Giles – Director of Maintenance and Facilities

Heather Friday – 4K – 8th grade Principal

Rod Watson – High School Principal

Matt Andres – Director of Food Service

Tabitha Becker – Director of Child Care and Before and After School Care

Mike Seymour – Director of Technology

Emily Krystowiak – High School Guidance Counselor

Ashley Raygo – Elementary Guidance Counselor

Marissa Petterson – Middle School Guidance Counselor, Mental Health Grant

Mary Lou Masanz – School Health Director

Tina Tysver – Parent and on site COVID-19 tester for the 2021-'22 SY

Mandy Hoogesteger – Board of Education President

Narrative

Pittsville School District is expected to receive \$480,454 in ESSER III funding to support the districts response to the COVID-19 pandemic which must be utilized between March 2020 and September 30, 2024. Funds are used to safely keep our schools open and address COVID-19 related areas which have impacted our students. The district has made many changes to make the schools a safe place for students which range from installing touchless fixtures throughout the district to the installation of air quality controls to decrease the chances of illness being spread through the air.

A minimum of 20% (\$96,090.80) of our funds will be spent on implement Evidence Based Intervention strategies (EBIS) to address delayed learning due to school closure in spring of 2020 and required quarantine through the last two school years. In Pittsville, the identified marginalized subgroups disproportionately affected by COVID-19 include children living in poverty and special education students. The district has been addressing the unique needs of these two groups prior to COVID-19 and in ways which do not draw unnecessary attention to the students.

We have invested in technology for all students, portable hotspots for families who cannot access broadband, hotspots in our buses, training and support for the district to offer Test to Stay COVID-19 testing so students who are close contacts and do not become symptomatic can stay in school instead of quarantine, many different face coverings and face shields, and altered the criteria to allow our extracurricular activities and athletics to continue as extended learning opportunities with as minimal disruption as possible.

Pittsville has always been committed to doing the best for our students regardless of the circumstances. Due to our combined efforts, the school district has not had to close down in person school attendance since May of 2020. The Board has supported the addition of 2 part time district substitute teachers and increased the pay for teachers who give up their preparation time to sub for other teachers who are sick or in quarantine. Families have done well in making decisions to keep children home when they are symptomatic and testing to be certain they do or do not have COVID, thereby reducing the number of school related infection vectors.

We have one extra part time person hired for food service to help with the increased number of meals served due to the USDA supported free meal program which has run for the last two years. An average of 400 breakfast and 500 lunch meals are served each day the last two years at no cost to students. The Seamless Summer Meals Option will end with the conclusion of this school year. Families need to complete the Free and Reduced Applications to determine their qualification for free and reduced meals for next year. More information to come as we near the application period.

We are in the third year of the state Mental Health Grant which funds the majority of our MS Guidance Counselor. Lowering the ratio of students to counselors provides opportunities to address social and emotional learning, counseling, and in some cases access to therapy services through referral. Currently there are no open seats in the therapy services program offered in Pittsville.

There is a noticeable increase in student discipline occurrences. Having additional counseling staff has helped address issues we may not have been aware of in the past. All disruptive behavior or learning difficulties are not SPED. Many require a personal interaction to meet their needs and help them get back on track as they do not have a disability, but an impact of fewer developmental experiences due to the pandemic. Pittsville has applied to add two (2) Americorp staff for the 2022-'23 school year to address growth and development. One for grades 4k-6 and the one for grades 7-12.

Pittsville was the first district in the state to fully implement a Test to Stay program in October 2021. Required training was completed and a designated tester was hired through NOAH Labs. The office staff in each area took charge of the record keeping, parent notifications, and school related contact tracing. The reason for implementing this program was to reduce the number of days students were not in school due to quarantine; directly and indirectly impacting lost learning time. This partnership has kept kids in school instead of in quarantine when they remained healthy after being a close contact of positive; thousands of days this school year. Having testing at school with 24-36 hour results on lab testing has been a game changer in keeping kids in school and their families safer. Rapid testing takes 15 minutes and interferes little with the school day.

Prior to any ESSER funds being available, the District purchased and installed touchless fixtures in all areas to reduce touch points in common spaces. Purchased electrostatic fogging equipment and do a deep clean of the entire district a minimum of two times each week. All touch points were disinfected three to four times a day as part of the custodial routine. Visitors and volunteers were all but eliminated when school was in session and all adults were required to wear a face mask through the middle of February 2022. We also opened our childcare services prior to children being allowed back on-site to address the needs of working households with children.

Each month the Board discusses COVID-19 and has open forum for the public prior to the discussion. Administration does a minimum of two county level, one state level, and one federal level health department meeting in addition to the CDC and area District Administrator meetings each month. August through February, the Superintendent has daily, 7 day a week, communication with the Wood County Health Department relative to testing, data sharing, isolation, and quarantine concerns. The partnership has been a high value non-political source of data which has been useful in making decisions to keep our kids in school and as safe as possible.

On February 14, 2022, the Board of Education moved our masking criteria from 5% high school students and 2% elementary school students positive to trigger universal masking for all students to a total of 10% positive cases in students and staff. Staff had been masked the entire school year up to this date. The ES was masked for 4.5 weeks and the HS for 1.5 weeks the entire year to that date. Our numbers have returned to the low single digits and families have, for the most part been cooperative by keeping sick children and household members home until they have test results and are cleared or complete isolation and quarantine.

Within our ESSER III Federal Allocation we have dedicated 21% or \$100,453.00 for Evidence Based Intervention Strategies. Additional EBIS are being implemented to address delayed learning through staff training, addition of primary support staff, software, and “Jump Start Summer School” in Math and Reading which runs for 4 weeks prior to the start of school in the fall.

The Pittsville School District is committed to providing the most effective educational programing and interventions possible within our resources. There are other areas we are addressing including the quality of our indoor air, mental health services, additional counseling in and outside of the district through partnerships, close working relationship with Wood County Health and Human services Departments, cleaning and disinfection controls, and continued awareness combined with a proactive stance to plan and respond for possible student and learning community needs.

1. This is the initial ESSER III LEA Plan required Budget Submission and explanation and pending DPI approval. Once approved it is likely to be revised which may increase the dollars spent on delayed learning but will not drop below the 20% required threshold.
2. Attached is the formal Sub-budget and Budget Section as submitted for review.