

Federal COVID Pandemic Relief Funds

In the spring of 2021, Smithtown CSD received notification of federal funds available from two stimulus packages established in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. On December 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) which provided Smithtown \$7,819,005 in funding between the two CRRSA funding sources:

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief 2 (ESSER 2) Fund: \$6,730,896
- Governor's Emergency Education Relief 2 (GEER 2) Fund: \$1,088,109

Subsequently, on March 11, 2021, the President signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), which provided Smithtown an additional federal allocation of \$1,849,742.

The expiration for the utilization of the CRRSA funds is September 30, 2023, essentially requiring the funds to be expended by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The ARP funds expire in September 2024, essentially requiring the funds to be expended by the 2023-24 school year.

The main objectives of the federal funds were to first, provide schools the ability to have students safely return to in-person instruction and second, to address learning loss. Accordingly, as the District had already achieved the full return of in-person instruction prior to the funding announcement, the District is utilizing these funds to address learning loss, provide continuity of instruction and enhance classroom technologies. The December 14, 2021, presentation on Supporting Student Learning Through the Pandemic can be found [here](#).

Each of the funding sources required school districts to submit applications for the entire allocation outlining the planned use of the funds, the timing of their planned expenditures and the respective budget allocations. **Please note: These spending plans are considered "initial" plans only and likely subject to amendments to match changing needs and available resources.** The following information provides the District's initial spending plans for each of the three funding sources:

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief 2 (ESSER 2) Fund: \$6,730,896:

2.00 FTE Behavioral Consultants: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Two special education behavioral consultants will work with children that are in need of support as it relates to behavioral management, students with autism, crisis management, functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention plans, and working with students and families that may need support in a school setting due to the impact of COVID on student functioning.

18.00 FTE Elementary Teacher Assistants: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Eighteen Elementary Teaching Assistants will provide academic intervention services at each elementary school. These certified teachers will push into classrooms to provide small-group instruction and/or provide quality whole-class instruction when classroom teachers are absent for professional training and other reasons. The goal will be to increase student access to high-quality academic intervention for the next two years and increase the ability to provide high-quality staff development to our full-time classroom teachers, improving overall teaching quality for the short-and long-term.

18.00 FTE Secondary Teacher Assistants: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Eighteen Secondary Teaching Assistants will provide academic support and intervention at each secondary school. These TAs will be certified in the core academic areas (ELA, mathematics, science and social studies) and will provide before-and after-school small-group academic support. They will also staff learning lab spaces to provide small-group academic support during the school day. These certified teachers will help close any gaps in student performance and increase the amount of time students have access to high-quality teachers in small groups over the next two years.

Total Estimated Cost: \$4,760,146 (Salaries and Benefits)

SCOPE Elementary Enrichment Program: Summer 2021

SCOPE elementary student enrichment classes (550 students) will provide social and emotional engagement as well as academic enrichment in a range of content areas, including STEM, physical education, nutrition, and literacy.

Estimated Cost \$96,250

Classroom audio/voice amplification systems: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Audio/voice amplification systems will be installed in classrooms district-wide. The audio system will amplify the voice of teacher, co-teacher, and/or computer presentation audio to be played over four ceiling mounted speakers. The balanced sound will help all students to hear

regardless of seating location and will also compensate for background noise caused by HVAC systems. Maintenance of the system will be performed by current staff in the IT and/or Facilities departments. The need for replacement parts is expected to be minimal in the foreseeable future and will be covered by the operating budget.

Estimated Cost \$1,621,500

BOCES Summer Classes: Summer 2021

Secondary student remedial classes (8 students) in core content areas will be provided for students who failed core content classes.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

SMART Boards purchases: 2021-22 and 2022-23

50 additional SMART Boards and associated brackets will be installed to support and complement use of SMART Board for remaining instructional spaces that do not have an Interactive White Boards.

Estimated Cost \$250,000

Governor's Emergency Education Relief 2 (GEER 2) Fund: \$1,088,109:

1.00 FTE Special Education Assistive Technology Teacher: 2021-22 and 2022-23

An assistive technology specialist will work with children that are in need of assistive technology evaluations and assistive technology implementation for special needs students. This individual will also assist students in accessing instruction and academic gap closing through student and staff training on the assistive technology programs and the implementation of assistive technology for the students within the academic setting. This individual will also assist in the selection of the appropriateness of particular devices and programs to help remedy individual student needs.

1.00 FTE School Psychologist: 2021-22 and 2022-23

A School Psychologist will work with children that are in need of support as it relates to academic needs, social emotional needs, counseling, and testing. This individual will also assist with the testing and procedures surrounding the CSE/CPSE/504 process. This position will be district wide.

6.00 FTE Elementary Teacher Assistants: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Elementary Teaching Assistants will provide academic intervention services at each elementary school. These certified teachers will push into classrooms to provide small-group instruction and/or provide quality whole-class instruction when classroom teachers are absent for professional training and other reasons. This will increase student access to high-quality academic intervention for the next two years and will increase our ability to provide high-quality staff development to our full-time classroom teachers, improving overall teaching quality for the short-and long-term.

Total Estimated Cost: \$1,072,359 (Salaries and Benefits)

BOCES Summer Classes: Summer 2021

Secondary student remedial classes (42 students) in core content areas will be provided for students who failed core content classes.

Estimated Cost \$15,750

American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Fund: \$1,849,742:**1.00 FTE Technology Integration Specialist: 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24**

A Technology Integration Specialist will provide full-time support to the faculty and staff on the best practices of technology integration in both lesson planning and the delivery of instruction. This specialized support will build the capacity of teachers to integrate meaningful opportunities for student learning and academic support through the use of technology to help close any gaps in student performance.

2.00 FTE Special Education Behavioral Consultant Teacher: 2023-24

The district will continue the employment of two behavior consultant teachers in the 2023-2024 school year that were originally hired with CRRSA funds to work with children that are in need of support as it relates to behavioral management, students with autism, crisis management, functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention plans, and working with students and families that may need support in a school setting due to impact of COVID on student functioning.

1.00 FTE Special Education Assistive Technology Teacher: 2023-24

The district will continue the employment of an assistive technology teacher in the 2023-2024 school year that was originally hired with CRRSA funds to work with children that are in need of

assistive technology evaluations and assistive technology implementation for special needs students. This individual will also assist students in accessing instruction and academic gap closing through student and staff training on the assistive technology programs and the implementation of assistive technology for the students within the academic setting. This individual will also assist in the selection of the appropriateness of particular devices and programs to help remedy individual student needs.

1.00 FTE School Psychologist: 2023-24

The district will continue the employment of a psychologist in the 2023-2024 school year that was originally hired with CRRSA funds to work with children that are in need of support as it relates to academic needs, social emotional needs, counseling, and testing. This individual will also assist with the testing and procedures surrounding the CSE/CPSE/504 process. This position will be district wide.

17.00 FTE Elementary Teacher Assistants: 2023-24

The District will continue the employment of seventeen elementary teacher assistants in the 2023-2024 school year that were originally hired with CRRSA funds to provide academic intervention services at each elementary school. These certified teachers will push into classrooms to provide small-group instruction and/or provide quality whole-class instruction when classroom teachers are absent for professional training and other reasons. This will increase student access to high-quality academic intervention and will increase our ability to provide high-quality staff development to our full-time classroom teachers, improving overall teaching quality for the short-and long-term.

Leveled Literacy Intervention Staff Training: 2021-22

Twenty-five district teachers will attend Leveled Literacy Intervention training.

Total Estimated Cost: \$1,786,154 (Salaries and Benefits)

SCOPE Secondary Summer Enrichment Program: Summer 2021

Summer courses will provide secondary students (241 students) the opportunity to get a head start in academic areas including Algebra, Geometry, middle school math, and writing. Additionally they will receive opportunities to build STEM skills, arts skills, and college preparation skills, including writing the college essay and enhancing their reading, writing and math skills for college entrance exams.

Estimated Cost \$21,088

Literacy/Reading Materials and Training: 2021-22

The district will purchase instructional reading materials for secondary reading and/or special education teachers. Staff training and workshops will be offered for these staff members on reading programs that coincide with these materials. These materials and workshop trainings will assist students that suffered learning loss. It will enhance students' ability to read and successfully interact with the curriculum and content being provided to them.

Estimated Cost \$42,500

Concerns Raised About Accepting Pandemic Federal Stimulus Funds

Each of these applications had sections, found here ([CRRSA](#), [ARP](#)) requiring the Superintendent of Schools to attest that the school district will meet several federal assurances aligned with legislation in order to be eligible to receive the funds. Assurance #17 on page 5 of the ARP application specifically references how the funds will be used in accordance with CDC guidance on safely opening and operating schools for in-person learning. It states **“The LEA assures that the LEA will include in its application to the Department for ARP-ESSER funds a plan, in a format prescribed by the Commissioner, that describes the extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning.”** NYSED issued guidance that it will permit previously developed reopening plans to satisfy this statutory requirement for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. Their justification was that New York State already had the school reopening plan requirement in place prior to the stimulus packages. This particular assurance requirement seems to be the concern raised by some community members, eluding that a “mask mandate” is tied directly to the receipt of ARP funds. However, the application attestation does not directly correlate with a mask mandate, but rather corresponds with the District’s reopening plan, which may be modified as necessary.