



## Poquoson City Public Schools Use of ESSER III Funds

### **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. Poquoson City Public Schools has been awarded \$464,283.53 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Mr. Arty Tillett, Superintendent, at [arty.tillett@poquoson.k12.va.us](mailto:arty.tillett@poquoson.k12.va.us) or 757-868-3055.

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, PCPS follows CDC, VDH and local Health Department guidance to the extent practicable. An updated Return to Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan is posted on our website.

### **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. Poquoson City Public Schools will use approximately \$332,414.53 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

- Purchase additional cleaning supplies, such as disinfection supplies including wipes.
- Purchase HEPA air purifiers for each classroom and library.
- Due to the uncertainty of the virus, PCPS will hire four permanent subs to have one at each school to provide coverage throughout the school day.
- To comply with the CDC recommendations for at least three feet of social distancing between students, PCPS needs to hire two additional elementary teachers to facilitate these distancing recommendations for SY 2021-2022.

### **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 after school programs, or extended school year programs. Poquoson City Public Schools will use approximately \$131,869 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

- To address the academic impact of lost instructional time by holding after school and/or Saturday intervention sessions to provide additional enrichment, remedial and academic support programming for students throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

- An expanded summer school program is being planned for the summers of 2022 and 2023 to provide additional remedial support.
- Professional learning and coaching for our school staff to address learning loss.

#### **Section 4: Addressing Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs**

##### **Academic Needs of Students**

As Poquoson City Public Schools concluded the 2020-21 academic year, we had the most robust summer academic program we have ever designed for students. Our summer instructional program included an in-person experience for kindergarten through eighth grade. This program was extended to five weeks this year and provided students with a rich, in-person summer program with a concentration in literacy, numeracy, and enrichment this past summer. High school students were provided with in-person summer academic support programming, credit recovery, and credit advancement. A similar summer school academic program is being planned for the next two summers to continue instructional efforts.

We plan to open the 2021-22 academic year with all of our students in person. Preliminary results indicate that all but six of our families plan to participate in school in person next year. We have invested heavily this year in health mitigation efforts. These investments have allowed us to safely bring students back into our schools throughout the current school year and have provided the foundation for us to prepare for an in-person school year for 2021-22.

Students who are granted permission to participate in a remote instructional experience next year will receive their instruction virtually through Virtual Virginia.

We have a strong structure in place for monitoring student academic performance and have continued to rigorously monitor student performance throughout the past fifteen months. Data analysis of individual student growth, traditional academic achievement, and qualitative data by way of student surveys has allowed our instructional team to continuously adjust pacing and curriculum in real time to ensure as much academic success as possible. Furthermore, that same data analysis has contributed to our programming decisions throughout the 2020-21 school year, for the upcoming summer, for the 2021-22 school year, and beyond.

##### **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Students**

Social Emotional: Poquoson City Public Schools will continue to support the social-emotional needs of our students as we begin our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mental health team members (school counselors, school psychologists, and a school social worker) will provide social-emotional support to students in varying capacities. In addition to all students having access to counselors at all schools, students also participate in class counseling lessons, small group counseling, and career and academic counseling. Additionally, PCPS coordinates several school activities to promote kindness, a welcoming school climate, and healthy decision making. Examples of these school-wide activities include Kindness Week activities, activities during Bully Prevention month, and special events targeted to teenagers to educate them on substance use and abuse.

Mental Health: As mentioned above, our mental health team is prepared to support our students and families as we begin recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Poquoson City Public Schools' mental health team consists of school counselors, school psychologists, and a social worker. Our mental health team provides a variety of services and supports to students including individual counseling, small group

counseling, and class-wide counseling lessons. We will have at least one school counselor at our primary and elementary schools, two school counselors at our middle school, and three school counselors at our high school. Additionally, we have two school psychologists who support students across our four schools. We also have a school social worker who will be providing intensive counseling support to elementary students through a blend of clinical counseling and school counseling models. The school social worker will also help to strengthen our partnerships with community agencies and connect families with community resources.

## **Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment**

Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year, Poquoson City Public Schools held stakeholders meetings with a Steering Committee that consisted of parents, teachers and school administrators to discuss reopening plans and mitigation strategies. Upon receiving ESSER funding, the planned uses of this funding were presented to the School Board throughout the year. At each School Board meeting, public comment was solicited from the community.

With the pending allocation of \$464,283.53 of more funding and the need for a 20% learning loss, division administrative level staff discussed additional needs for COVID-19 related learning loss recovery and continuing risk mitigation measures. This plan was also presented to the School Board and public comment was solicited. Therefore, stakeholder groups have representation from our public and our internal school community.

## **Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public**

Poquoson City Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at [www.poquoson.k12.va.us](http://www.poquoson.k12.va.us);
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Mary Ardolino, Director of Student Services at [mary.ardolino@poquoson.k12.va.us](mailto:mary.ardolino@poquoson.k12.va.us) or 757-868-3050 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 Mary Ardolino, Director of Student Services at [mary.ardolino@poquoson.k12.va.us](mailto:mary.ardolino@poquoson.k12.va.us) or 757-868-3050.