



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

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American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund III Plan

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. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) has been awarded \$674,624.17 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to Pat Trice, Superintendent, via email at pat.trice@vsdbs.virginia.gov or by phone at 540-332-9000.

VSDB's goal is to establish and maintain a safe and healthy learning and work environment to the greatest extent possible. The plan is aligned with guidance from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). To maintain a safe and healthy learning environment, VSDB has required the correct wearing of face masks by students and staff, enforcing safe distancing requirements, and increasing and enforcing proper hygiene practices. Facilities have seen increased sanitization efforts to include but not limited to, increased filter replacements, water bottle fillers in place of water coolers, increased cleaning and the use of electrostatic sprayers.

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. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind will use approximately \$555,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

1. Air Handler replacement/upgrades - \$400,000. This will upgrade and improve air ventilation systems in the Cafeteria and Auditorium areas.
2. Commercial Bus Service - \$75,000. VSDB will increase the use of commercial buses to allow for the proper social distancing of students during trips home each weekend and their return trip to school.
3. Portable UV-C air purifiers - \$80,000. Portable air purifiers will be purchased and placed in classrooms and residential areas.

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. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind will use approximately \$10,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

1. Postage - \$10,000. This has been set aside for information needing to be sent home to parents or for work to be sent home to any students doing virtual learning.
2. VSDB received ESSER II funds and have earmarked 70% of those funds for an extended school year program. During the summer of 2021, VSDB provided a week of extended learning to students who applied to the program. An amendment to this grant will be completed if additional funds are needed to pay for extended year learning.

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. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind will use approximately \$88,094.17 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies - \$88,094.17

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

The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) will address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students. VSDB's total student population is served through Special Education services. VSDB will address the unique needs of all of its students including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and migratory students. All students across all grade levels will be monitored academically through their performance on informal and formal assessments as well as progress measures directly related to each student's prescriptive Individual Education Plan (IEP). Performance data will be used to drive instruction and to assess the need for additional support and/or interventions as deemed necessary by the educational and/or IEP team.

Social and emotional learning will be addressed and supported with frequent communication with students and families. Due to the complex learning needs of its student body, the lack of fluent sign communication at home for the majority of VSDB's students who are deaf, and the absence of braille skills and specialized technology in the home to support those students who are blind or vision impaired, VSDB will support continuity of instruction through a combination of instructional and support strategies to include but not limited to individualized learning packets, Google Classroom, and face-to-face video sessions. Individualized learning packets will be developed prescriptive to each student's language and learning needs as outlined in their IEP and provide review material for concepts taught previously as well as introduced to the greatest extent possible, new concepts. Packets will be mailed home every two weeks and follow up support will be provided to parents and students as needed. Weekly check-ins with students/parents by

teachers and school counselors will occur to ensure an optimal level of support. Should additional mental health services be warranted, VSDB will work with families to identify mental health resources in their local areas or provide tele-support through VSDB's contracted psychological services. In addition, during the 2020-2021 school year, several VSDB staff enhanced their support skills with training in Trauma Informed Care to support effective support services to students and their families.

Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind conducted consultation in the following ways:

1. Meetings were held with stakeholders including: superintendent, principal, faculty, other educators, school staff, and a member of the community.
2. VSDB has twice monthly COVID mitigation meetings that includes the superintendent, principal, directors, and managers to discuss issues.
3. The plan was submitted to the VSDB Board of Visitors September 2021 meeting.
4. The public and parents have the opportunity to provide input by contacting VSDB either on the school's website, email, or phone.

Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public

The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

1. The plan is posted at <https://vsdb.k12.va.us/covid-19-resources/>
2. The plan is available in English
3. The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Laura Otrhalik at (540) 332-9000 to request translation; and
4. 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 Laura Otrhalik at (540) 332-9000