

**American Rescue Plan - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief  
(ARP/ESSER III)  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Updated: 11-29-21**

**1. What is ARP/ESSER III?**

ESSER stands for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds. ESSER III was funded through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. This Federal funding provides State Education Agencies (SEAs), and their local educational agencies (LEAs), with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had (and continues to have) on elementary and secondary schools across the country.

**2. How was the calculation for ARP/ESSER III grants determined?**

States are required to allocate 90% of their awarded ARP/ESSER III funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) using the same proportional calculation used to distribute other Federal funds such as Title I, Part A.

Lapeer Community Schools has been allocated \$5.83 million in ARP/ESSER III funds from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Of this amount, 20% must be set aside to address the academic impact of lost instructional time for students.

**3. How is Lapeer Community Schools deciding how to spend its funding?**

A federal requirement is that 20% of ARP/ESSER III funding is spent on addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time for students. For Lapeer Community Schools, this amount is \$1.17 million. There are several areas that can be considered when planning to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, including: administering and using high quality assessments, implementing evidence-based activities, and providing information and assistance to families on how to effectively support students.

Another requirement of ARP/ESSER III is “meaningful consultation” with stakeholders. This includes staff, parents, students and community members. Surveys have been distributed to staff, parents and students. Using survey data, activities have been identified to meet the needs of students academically, socially and emotionally. As LCS continues to use data to evaluate programming, updates will be made to the grant to reflect the needs of students.

LCS must also submit a plan of use for ARP/ESSER III funds to the MDE to ensure that all activities identified align to the allowable uses of the grant.

**4. What are the allowable uses of ESSER III funds?**

There are 16 allowable uses for ARP/ESSER III funds. (See Appendix A for allowable uses.) When evaluating whether spending items are appropriate, the District considers the following questions:

- Will the proposed use of funds “prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus?”
- Is it an allowable use of funds?
- Is it reasonable and necessary?
- Does it promote equity?
- Does it support returning students to the classroom?

**5. What is the spending timeframe?**

ARP/ESSER III funds can be used for expenditures between March 13, 2020 - September 30, 2024.

**6. What is the oversight of spending these funds?**

School districts are required to submit a spending plan to the Michigan Department of Education, where districts identify activities that will be funded using ARP/ESSER III funding along with financial allocations appropriate to the activity. Districts are responsible for allocating funds to appropriate activities and maintaining accurate records of expenditures, as is required with all grants. Documentation of expenditures is maintained by both the LCS Department of Instruction and LCS Business Office, with both departments checking on allowability of expenditure and alignment to predetermined activities.

In addition to the school district maintaining documentation of activities and expenditures, the Michigan Department of Education has the right to require documentation of such activities and expenditures to ensure alignment to the 16 allowable uses of ARP/ESSER III funds.

**7. Can these dollars be used to pay for staff?**

ARP/ESSER III funds can be used to continue to pay existing salaries for staff and contractors, as well as hire new staff to meet the needs of the District. ARP/ESSER III funds cannot be used for any permanent contractual increase in salaries.

**8. Do ARP/ESSER III funds come from our local tax dollars?**

ARP/ESSER III funds are federal funds that have been awarded to the states. While these federal funds are acquired through taxes, this funding is not part of the local property taxes that fund the normal operations of the school district.

## **APPENDIX A: Allowable Uses of ARP/ESSER III Funding**

1. Any activity authorized by the ESEA, including the Native Hawaiian Education Act and the Alaska Native Educational Equity, Support, and Assistance Act, any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, any activity authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and any activity authorized by subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
2. Coordinating preparedness and response efforts of LEAs with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.
3. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
4. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.
5. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs.
6. Training and professional development for staff of the LEA on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
7. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of the LEA, including buildings operated by such LEA.
8. Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the IDEA and ensuring other education services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.
9. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
10. Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence based full-service community schools.
11. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and enrichment and supplemental after-school programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

12. Addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time among an LEA's students, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, including by
  - a. Administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including through differentiating instruction.
  - b. Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students.
  - c. Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment.
  - d. Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.
13. School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.
14. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.
15. Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.
16. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in the LEA and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA.