



## AGENDA

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education  
**Educational Services Committee**

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Chairperson  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Christopher Inda  
John Krings, President  
Elizabeth St. Myers  
Julie Timm

September 3, 2024

LOCATION: Board of Education, 510 Peach Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment

Persons who wish to address members of the Committee may make a statement pertaining to a specific agenda item. The Committee Chair will establish limits for speakers due to time constraints. Comments made by the public shall be civil in content and tone. Speakers bear the personal risk if comments made are defamatory, slanderous, or otherwise harmful to another individual. Please keep in mind that this is a Committee meeting of the Board open to the public, and not a public hearing.

- IV. Actionable Items
  - A. FAST (Families and Schools Together)
  - B. FAST Works
- V. Updates
  - A. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - B. ESSER III Final Report
  - C. LU Software Purchase
- VI. Consent Agenda Items
- VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Wisconsin open meetings law requires that the Board, or Board Committee, only take action on subject matter that is noticed on their respective agendas. Persons wishing to place items on the agenda should contact the District Office at 715-424-6701, at least seven working days prior to the meeting date for the item to be considered. The item may be referred to the appropriate committee or placed on the Board agenda as determined by the Superintendent and/or Board president.

With advance notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities by providing a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aids, by calling 715-424-6701.

School Board members may attend the above Committee meeting(s) for information gathering purposes. If a quorum of Board members should appear at any of the Committee meetings, a regular School Board meeting may take place for purposes of gathering information on an item listed on one of the Committee agendas. If such a meeting should occur, the date, time, and location of the Board meeting will be that of the particular Committee as listed on the Committee agenda however, no deliberation or action will be taken by other Committees or the full Board of Education.



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- IV. Actionable Items

A. FAST (Families and Schools Together)

FAST is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program designed to help children succeed in school by strengthening supportive relationships at home. Based on evidence-based practices and rigorously tested, FAST empowers parents as effective family leaders, connects families with schools, and fosters a community committed to children's well-being and education. FAST activities aim to strengthen family bonds, empower parents, enhance positive communication, and improve children's academic performance and emotional functioning.

During a FAST Cycle, families meet weekly for eight sessions, each following a research-backed format. These sessions are led by a team comprising a Parent Partner, school staff, and two Community Partners, all working together to empower parents and connect families to the school and broader community.

In the 2022-2023 school year, Pitsch Early Learning Center and Washington Elementary successfully implemented FAST, with Grove and Howe Elementary Schools joining the program in 2023-2024.

WRPS plans to continue partnering with Families and Schools Together, Inc., to implement FAST at Pitsch Early Learning Center, Washington, Grove, and Howe Elementary Schools, with an estimated cost of \$10,120.00. Team members will receive stipends based on their involvement, totaling approximately \$14,780.00. These expenses will be covered by the Stronger Connections and Mental Health Grants.

**The administration recommends continuing the implementation of FAST at these schools for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond, contingent upon ongoing Grant funding.**

B. FASTWorks

FASTWorks is an extension of the FAST program, designed to maintain the connection between schools and families after the eight-week FAST cycle concludes. FASTWORKS involves monthly, parent-led events where special play or 1:1 time from the original FAST program is incorporated. The Parent Partner and/or a School Partner from the original FAST team are required to attend these sessions to support families.

**The administration recommends funding up to eight FAST WORKS events per building each year, at a cost of \$150.00 per night, which includes a staff hourly rate of \$25.00 and other associated expenses. Stronger Connections and the Mental Health Grant will be used to pay for the staff and other associated expenses. Estimated costs if all buildings implement FASTWorks is \$4800. This funding is recommended for the current year and future years, contingent on the availability of grant funds for any building running a FAST Cycle.**

V. Updates

A. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to hold schools accountable for student achievement. In addition, ESSA requires every state to measure performance in reading, math, and science. ESSA includes entitlement grants that come from the federal government through the states. Included in the grants are Titles I, II, III and IV. Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools will receive \$1,283,366.00 in Title I, \$175,918.00 for Title II, \$14,297.00 for Title III and \$98,004.00 for Title IV. These amounts do not include any carryover dollars on hand from unspent Title dollars from 2023-2024. Carryover amounts are being determined. There is a total of \$1,571,585.00 in ESSA grant funds designated for 2024-2025. This is a decrease of \$85,018.00 from the 2023-2024 school year.

The District currently has four School Wide Title buildings: Grove, Howe, Mead and River Cities High School. Title I funds are allocated for improving basic programs by bringing new resources and requirements to provide personnel, instruction and interventions to close achievement gaps districtwide.

Title I supports some reading and math interventionists and programs at Title schools, assists our homeless programming with personnel and transportation costs, provides professional development for staff members, funds parent involvement activities in Title buildings, and allows the District to employ behavior support paraprofessionals at Title buildings.

Title II funds are used for preparing, training and recruiting high quality teachers, principals and other school personnel. Funds are used to support the New Colleague/Mentor Program, to offset the salary of one Student Engagement Facilitator and one achievement gap reduction teacher, as well as support the instructor stipends paid for professional development opportunities.

Title III funds are used to improve the education of English learners (ELs) and immigrant students. The funds can be used to support a variety of services including English language proficiency, professional development for teachers, after-school tutoring, summer programs and books, computers and web-based subscriptions.

Title IV funds are used to ensure that WRPS students have access to a well-rounded education, promote safe and healthy schools, and provide an effective use of technology throughout the district. Title IV is used to offset the cost of conferences, teacher training, supporting grade level leaders, providing supplies for parent outreach, and supporting professional development around our learning management systems.

#### B. ESSER III Final Report

The Wisconsin Rapids Public School District has strategically and responsibly utilized the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds, totaling \$7,082,465, to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. WRPS has demonstrated transparency to stakeholders, including the School Board, parents, educators, and the broader community.

All ESSER III Formula Grant Funds have been expended by the September 2024 deadline imposed by the State of Wisconsin. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will share the District ESSER III Final Summary Report. The report is included as Attachment A.

#### C. LU Projector Software

As part of its latest acquisition, the Wisconsin Rapids elementary physical education program purchased LU projectors to enhance student engagement in physical education and to offer a stronger collaboration between academics and physical education instruction. It was understood at the time that there would be an ongoing cost for program software renewal in the future years.

At the end of August Justin Weinhold, Physical Education Curriculum Coordinator, learned that WRPS could renew its LU program software for 5 years with a \$1,900 per school discount if we did so before September 1, 2024. Therefore, we secured this purchase and renewed the LU software in time to take advantage of this special pricing. A total amount of \$36,000.00 for the 5-year renewal has been paid through the Curriculum and Technology Referendum budget.

#### VI. Consent Agenda Items

Committee members will be asked to decide which items should be placed on the consent agenda for the regular Board of Education meeting.

## VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

Agenda items are determined by the Committee Chair after consultation with appropriate administration depending upon other agenda items, presentation information, and agenda availability.

Future agenda items/information requests include, but are not limited to:

- New Course/Curriculum Modifications and Proposals - Information (October)
- Wisconsin Student Assessment System Results: 2023-2024 (October)
- Early Literacy Remediation Plan (October)
- Curriculum Proposals: New Courses and Curriculum Modifications - Approval (November)
- Early College Credit Program (ECCP) and Start College Now (SCN) Applications (November)
- 2025-26 Strategic Plan Initial Discussion With Board (November)



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# **ESSER III**

# **FINAL Summary Report**

***September 2024***

***Respectfully submitted by Roxanne Filtz  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction***

## **Summary of Expenses**

The Wisconsin Rapids Public School District has strategically and responsibly utilized the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds, totaling \$7,082,465, to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, ESSER III aimed to enhance the local educational agencies' (LEAs) capacity to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the pandemic. This grant followed the earlier ESSER I and ESSER II Formula Grants.

Wisconsin Rapids Public School District was allocated \$7,082,465 in ESSER III funds of which 20% of the funds must be identified as meeting Evidence Based Instructional Strategies (EBIS). WRPS needed to identify \$1,416,493 for EBIS. In order to demonstrate a commitment to implementing proven strategies for educational improvement, WRPS has allocated 71% (\$4,999,371.49) of its total ESSER III funds to support activities and strategies outlined in the EBIS categories.

Evidence Based Instructional Strategies addressed include *Active Family and Community Engagement, Administering and Using High-Quality Assessments, Assisting Elementary Students Struggling with Mathematics, Collaborative Leadership in Practice, Effective Fractions Instruction for K-8, Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners, Evidence-Based Strategies for Social and Emotional Learning and Mental Health, Evidence-Based Summer Programming, Foundational Skills to Support K-3 Reading, Integrated Student Supports, Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 - 8, MLSS in Reading/Math/PBIS Supported by Wisconsin RtI Center, Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning, Standards-Aligned Instructional Materials and Professional Learning, and Teaching Elementary Students to Write Effectively.*

Some examples of purchases made that support the Evidence Based Instructional Strategies listed above include When Life Is a Puzzle Counseling, Gaggle Therapy, various professional development opportunities for both instructional and non-instructional staff, programs that promote social and emotional wellbeing such as 7 Mindsets, Move This World, Zones of Regulation, PBIS, Responsive Classroom and Conscious Discipline, participation in the NAREN Wisconsin conference (National At-Risk Education Network), LETRS training, Solution Tree PLC training, Link Crew Training, ACT Certified Teacher Training, work with the Ho-Chunk Nation SEED program, PLC integration, maintaining community partnerships with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Wisconsin Rapids, and a wide variety of software programs and classroom resource purchases to promote a deeper understanding of math and reading in all grades as well as promote a greater understanding of student data and using that data to improve teacher practice and student learning.

Although purchases were made at all levels, there was a concentrated effort to improve the overall atmosphere of Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS). Staff members from the middle school participated in several local and national conferences designed to strengthen WRAMS as a middle school by learning more about middle-level best practices. Participants who attended the National Middle School Conference in Maryland were expected to gain tools to support the social and emotional needs of their students, enhance their executive functioning skills, and expand their understanding of young adolescent development. In addition, the goal of attending the conferences was to expand the overall understanding of evidence-based middle grade practices like advisory groups, interdisciplinary instruction, teaming, project-based learning, responsive scheduling, and more. ESSER dollars were also utilized at WRAMS to build an alternative education option called the Bridge Program within the school building. This program is designed to provide a means for students to be removed temporarily from regular classroom schedules where they were not seeing success, work on developing necessary social and behavioral skills along with maintaining academic participation, and then transition back into the regular classroom. ESSER III dollars were spent on staffing this program as well as remodeling existing spaces to create a location within WRAMS for this work to occur. In addition to these items, ESSER dollars were also used to purchase software programs, increase math intervention time, provide educational resources, and offer professional development as well as release time for teachers to evaluate data and explore educational options that could be implemented to improve the overall student success of students at WRAMS.

ESSER III funds facilitated community connections, particularly with the Wisconsin Rapids Area Boys and Girls Club, supporting programs like the Morning Jumpstart initiative, providing morning wrap-around care and additional academic support in each of our elementary schools.

The creation of the Student Engagement Facilitator (SEF) positions, supported by ESSER III dollars, proved instrumental in enhancing student engagement, providing behavioral support, and implementing professional learning communities across all district buildings. We moved our existing 5.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of Instructional Coaches to this newly created position and hired a total of 9.25 FTE across the district. We have been able to support the increase of 4.25 FTE through the use of ESSER III dollars. Unfortunately, these positions have since been reduced to 5.25, we are hoping to find a way to increase their FTE in the coming years as they continue to be a valuable asset to our families, students and staff.

Furthermore, the district wisely allocated funds to hire additional classroom teachers, reducing class sizes over three years. Over the course of three years, 28 classroom teachers have had a portion or all of their salaries covered with ESSER



III dollars. In addition, ESSER III grant funding supported an increase in math and reading intervention personnel, provided a stipend to a number of our mentor teachers, allowed the district to hire an additional elementary ESL teacher and provide classroom substitute teachers so that regular classroom teachers could take part in data evaluation days. In order to provide extra support for our special education students, the district hired 8 additional Special Education Program aides using ESSER III grant dollars.

The expenditure of ESSER III dollars extended to the purchase of manipulatives, supplies, flexible seating options, and supportive technology programs. Each building received a per-pupil stipend to address unique needs arising from the pandemic, resulting in various enhancements such as interactive platforms for physical education and building remodel projects for family resource centers and health rooms. Finally, ESSER III grant dollars helped to fund a portion of the district's Pitsch Early Learning Center which was established to meet the growing needs of our 3 year old early childhood learners as well as some of our district's 4K learners.

All expenses were clearly outlined in the District's ESSER III Formula Grant LEA Plan, presented to the WRPS School Board in January 2022 and reviewed and updated in May 2022. The district's commitment to transparency and accountability ensured that identified projects received the necessary financial support. Amid the challenges of the pandemic, the Wisconsin Rapids Public School District remained resilient and continued to provide exceptional educational opportunities to the students of the greater Wisconsin Rapids area.

## **Accountability**

A comprehensive account of all ESSER grant expenditures has been documented in the District's ESSER III Formula Grant LEA Plan and the district has complied with all of the state requirements for review and reporting of the grant's progress. Once the District ESSER III Plan was written and gained preliminary approval from the school board in February 2022, the District collected feedback from students, staff, families and community members from February 7-28, 2022. The plan was reviewed and submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for approval, which was received in April 2022. The plan was then taken to the full board for final approval in May 2022 and posted to the public facing District webpage.

The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan was initially approved by the full school board on November 8, 2021. The school board

received updates regarding the plan on 5/9/22, 11/14/22 and 5/8/23 as required by the DPI. The Safe Return Plan has been posted on the public facing district webpage as required. In addition, periodic updates have been provided to the school board regarding ESSER III expenditures.

By upholding these standards of accountability, WRPS has demonstrated transparency to stakeholders, including the School Board, parents, educators, and the broader community. This action highlights the district's commitment to leveraging ESSER III funds effectively to address the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic while fostering an environment of trust and fiscal responsibility.

## **In Summary**

All ESSER III Formula Grant Funds have been expended by the deadline of September 2024. A strategic objective was to utilize a portion of the funds to secure three-year renewals for some of our most costly software programs. This action aims to alleviate the burden on the Fund 10 budget for the next two years. These software programs play an important role in providing educational support, consolidating comprehensive student data for instructional purposes, offering differentiated intervention based on individual student needs, and providing crucial support for math and reading instruction.

The Morning Jumpstart Program, a collaborative project with the Wisconsin Rapids Area Boys and Girls Club, has garnered immense community support and positive feedback. As a result of this positive feedback, the District has developed a sustainable funding solution to keep the program running beyond the ESSER III grant period.

The district aims to maintain a sense of stability in staffing; Nearly 100% of the teachers added through ESSER funds have been made "permanent" through attrition in regards to retiring or resigning teachers. The District will continue to analyze the positive effect the Student Engagement Facilitators had on student's academic performance and overall social/emotional health and school engagement and determine the future of these positions that were funded, in part, through ESSER grant dollars.

## **Reports**

The following chart provides the fiscal report outlining how the ESSER III Formula Grant dollars have been spent during the 3-year period of the grant.

### **Expenditure Totals as of September 1, 2024**

<b>ESSER III Final Budget</b>		
General Education	Total Amount	
Personnel	\$	4,016,233.28
Purchased Services	\$	1,577,721.93
Non-Capital Objects	\$	289,443.54
Capital Objects	\$	93,198.48
		\$ 5,976,597.23
Special Education	Total Amount	
Personnel	\$	689,508.92
Non-Capital Objects	\$	2,032.00
		\$ 691,540.92
	<b>Total Amount Budgeted</b>	<b>\$ 6,668,138.15</b>
	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 7,082,465.00</b>
	Difference - Indirect Costs	\$ 414,326.85

## **Personnel**

Includes:

- Classroom teachers to reduce class size
- Interventionists
- Student Engagement Facilitators
- Mentors for new hires
- Professional Development substitute teachers costs
- ESL teacher
- Bridge Program - teacher stipend
- Common School Fund Management Stipend
- Family Engagement Activities Stipends
- Health Aide
- Special Education Program Aide
- Special Education Specialty Teachers - Adaptive Phy Ed

## **Purchased Services**

Includes:

- Therapy
- Internet Services to families in need + Kajeets
- Software programs for instruction
- Instructional Staff Training
- Non-Instructional Staff Training
- Morning Jumpstart
- Remodeling
- Zoom/Software to communicate between home and school
- Resources for graduating seniors - Signal Vine
- Field Trips - virtual and in person (after Covid)
- Miscellaneous Items

## **Non Capital Objects**

Includes:

- Hygiene/Medical/Health Room Supplies and Equipment
- Books/Workbooks/Textbooks
- Desks/Manipulatives/Supplies/Storage/Cards/Chair bands
- Interventions
- Instructional Media
- Technology Supplies

## **Capital Objects**

Includes:

- Educational Technology - Lu Projectors
- Remodeling
- Water cooler bottle fillers