



Resources

FOR WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BY VICTORIA CAMPBELL

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a potentially devastating impact on students, families, and school staff members across the country. Many districts closed their doors to in-person learning and some students struggled to engage in distance learning in the 2020-2021 school year.

Washoe County School District (“WCSD”) was one of the largest urban districts in the country to keep its doors open during the 2020-21 school year, welcoming its 62,000 students and 8,000-plus staff members into the classroom while also giving families the option to engage in distance learning. As the 2021-22 school year began, all students returned to the classrooms for in-person learning, although families could enroll in the district’s North Star Online School if they chose. Educators and staff members worked closely with families and students to keep them on track with their studies, monitoring their progress and successes, and providing supports and resources when they needed assistance.

Now, as part of the American Rescue Plan, the WCSD is receiving \$122 million in funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (“ESSER”) to help support its work on behalf of students and families. Under federal guidelines, this funding is only allocated to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. ESSER is the single largest targeted investment in K-12 public education in the history of our nation. WCSD’s total

allocation of ESSER funding is just over \$122 million, which must be spent by September 30, 2024.

This support addresses students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs while considering the unique needs of student groups most negatively impacted by the circumstances created by the pandemic, including students who are:

- » Members of historically underrepresented populations
- » English learners
- » Living with disabilities
- » Living in poverty
- » Living in foster care
- » Unsheltered (homeless)

WCSD reached out to the community for input on specific uses for the funding within the federal guidelines and is directing these financial resources toward students and services that are most in need as recovery from the pandemic continues. ESSER funding is supporting tutoring programs at 76 WCSD schools. In the ArrowCreek area, 16 teachers, tutors, and interventionists are working with more than 570 students at Galena High School, Marce Herz Middle School, and Lenz and Pleasant Valley elementary school to provide tutoring before and after school and/or during the school day, depending on each school’s schedule. Tutoring is one of the best ways to address each student’s unique needs and provide strategic, targeted interventions.

In addition, ESSER funding is supporting additional positions and programs in

Counseling, Equity & Diversity, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Intervention, Psychological Services, and Student Health Services. Family School Partnerships also received ESSER support for five positions to aid students who are high-risk for dropping out of school. The funding also supports the hiring of a general Family Graduation Advocate, a Native American Graduation Advocate, and three Family Graduation Specialists for high schools who work directly with students to support individual needs and accelerate learning. School site-specific plans to support student learning, intersessions, and summer school are available for all interested students.

IN WCSD, ESSER FUNDING IS SUPPORTING:

- »» Additional Special Education teachers
- »» Summer school
- »» Tutoring (i.e., before/after school, Saturday school, teacher prep buy-out for additional class period for instruction)
- »» Social and emotional support of students, educators, and staff
- »» Additional attendance personnel
- »» Additional school counselors
- »» An additional school psychologist
- »» Additional social workers
- »» Access to high-quality professional development for educators
- »» Equity and Diversity training
- »» Professional development for elementary teachers in best practices in English Language Arts and Mathematics:
 - Professional Learning Communities
 - Scholarships for aspiring Special Education teachers
 - Incentives for guest teachers (substitutes)
 - Access to high-quality instructional materials for educators and students
 - Instructional curriculum in English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies

For more information about how the WCSD is using ESSER funding, visit www.washoeschools.net/esser.

