

**Virginia Department of Education  
School Division/LEA ARP ESSER Spending Plan**

**Introduction**

On October 24, 2022, Governor Glenn Youngkin and state education leaders presented to the public a [summary](#) of the 2022 National Assessment of Education Progress data for Virginia. The data indicate that Virginia had the most significant declines in reading and mathematics in the nation. [Our Commitment to Virginia’s Children](#) is a seven step action plan to reverse the downward path of declining achievement and ensure that all children in Virginia have the tools and support structure to get back on track.

In Action Seven of the action plan, Governor Youngkin challenges school divisions to spend all of their remaining Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds on proven efforts to recover learning like: supplementing learning through instruction before school, after school, on weekends, and in the summer; providing direct support to families to access tutoring; extending the school year; and rewarding those teachers and schools that make the greatest impact on student learning with performance bonuses. Action Seven also directs the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to require all school divisions to reengage the public in consultation and to update their American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER spending plans, as initially required by federal regulation, by December 31, 2022.

To meet the requirement to update the ARP ESSER spending plan, each school division/Local Educational Agency (LEA) must complete all sections of this template. The completed template must be made publicly available on the LEA website by December 31, 2022. The Office of Federal Pandemic Relief Programs will monitor the public posting of updated plans on LEA websites and the alignment of updated plans with LEAs’ applications for ARP ESSER funds. Questions about this template should be directed to [vdoefederalrelief@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:vdoefederalrelief@doe.virginia.gov).

**Section 1: General Information**

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| A. School Division/LEA Name                     | Wythe County Public Schools |
| B. Division Number                              | 097                         |
| C. Contact Name                                 | Dr. Brad B. Haga            |
| D. Contact Email                                | brad.haga@wythek12.org      |
| E. Contact Phone #                              | 276-228-5411                |
| F. Amount of ARP ESSER funding allocated to LEA | \$7,898,160.13              |

**Section 2: Transparency and Accessibility**

- A. LEA webpage where plan is posted (provide URL) [https://cdn5-ss16.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_433895/File/22-23%20Health%20Wellness%20Docs/WCPS%20ARP%20ESSER%20PLAN%20Amended%20on%209-28-22.pdf](https://cdn5-ss16.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_433895/File/22-23%20Health%20Wellness%20Docs/WCPS%20ARP%20ESSER%20PLAN%20Amended%20on%209-28-22.pdf)

- B. Describe how the plan is, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand, or if not practicable, will be orally translated for parents with limited English proficiency.

The plan is easy to understand and written in terms that are practical and easy to follow. Upon request, copies can be translated for parents with limited English proficiency and any other stakeholders that might have difficulty comprehending.

- C. Describe how the plan will be provided upon request in an alternative accessible format to a parent who is an individual with a disability.

The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Susan Hill at 276-228-5411 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 Wythe County Public Schools at 276-228-5411.

### **Section 3: Opportunity for Public Comment**

- A. Describe how the LEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input on the updated ARP ESSER spending plan since initial submission in August 2021, with emphasis on the 2022-2023 school year.

Public comment, public input, and school board discussions during school board meetings (2021 and 2022) were ongoing about the use of the ARP ESSER plan. In addition to public meetings, there were Foundation meetings, parent advisory meetings, and other civic organization meetings, where ARP ESSER was explained in detail. Questions and suggestions were accepted from the public and all parties were informed and awarded the opportunity to ask questions and offer input on the ARP ESSER funding. Also, there were numerous meetings with our local board of supervisors about the use of these funds as well. During these meetings the public provided input and asked questions on the updated ARP ESSER plan. There was also several news articles in the local newspaper explaining purpose and planned use of the funds to be allocated for WCPS. Public comment was offered at every school board meeting in regard to ESSER III funding. There was also public comment/input offered at the joint board of supervisors/school board meeting on November 30, 2021. For the calendar year of 2021, there was discussion and input from the public during our regular scheduled school board meetings on August 12, 2021 and September 9, 2021. For the calendar year of 2022, there was discussion and input from the public during our regular scheduled school board meetings, January 13, 2022, May 3, 2022, April 22, 2022, and August 10, 2022, and December 8, 2022.

- B. Describe how the LEA took public input since August 2021 into account.  
Please see answer from above.

### **Section 4: Consultation with Stakeholders**

Describe how the LEA consulted with each stakeholder group below. If a stakeholder group is not present in the LEA, indicate Not Applicable in the description of consultation conducted. If the LEA conducted a survey as a consultation method, provide a summary of the survey results as an Appendix to this spending plan.

- A. Students  
Description of consultation conducted- Superintendent's Student Advisory Group and Student School Board Representative  
Uses consulted on- Construction and Learning Loss  
Feedback received- General Questions and Explanations
- B. Families  
Description of consultation conducted- Superintendent's Parent Advisory Group, School Board Meetings, and Foundation for Excellence Board Meetings  
Uses consulted on- Construction and Learning Loss  
Feedback received- General Questions and Explanations
- C. School and district administrators including special education administrators-  
Description of consultation conducted, Leadership Team Meetings and Principals Meetings  
Uses consulted on- Construction and Learning Loss  
Feedback received- General Questions and Explanations
- D. Teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions-  
Description of consultation conducted-Principal Meetings, Central Office visits at School Faculty Meetings, and WCVEA monthly meetings.  
Uses consulted on- Construction and Learning Loss  
Feedback received- General Questions and Explanations
- E. Tribes, if applicable-N/A  
Description of consultation conducted- N/A  
Uses consulted on- N/A  
Feedback received- N/A
- F. Civil rights organizations, including disability rights organizations  
Description of consultation conducted-Meetings with Wytheville Residents on the naming of new SMMS  
Uses consulted on-Construction and Learning Loss  
Feedback received- General Questions and Explanations
- G. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved services  
Description of consultation conducted- N/A  
Uses consulted on- N/A  
Feedback received- N/A
- H. Community based organizations, including partnerships to promote access to before and after-school programming  
Description of consultation conducted- N/A  
Uses consulted on- N/A  
Feedback received- N/A

- I. Early childhood education providers and families, including partnerships to ensure access to and continuity of care for families with children of different ages, particularly as they transition to school  
Description of consultation conducted- N/A  
Uses consulted on- N/A  
Feedback received- N/A

**Section 5: Addressing Learning Loss (recommended to be 100% of an LEA’s remaining allocation and must be at least 20% of an LEA’s allocation per federal statute)**

Section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA to use *at least* twenty percent of its formula funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions. **Governor’s Challenge:** in Action Seven of [Our Commitment to Virginia’s Children](#), Governor Youngkin challenges LEAs to spend all of their remaining Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds on proven efforts to recover learning, such as: supplementing learning through instruction before school, after school, on weekends, and in the summer; providing direct support to families to access tutoring; extending the school year; and rewarding those teachers and schools that make the greatest impact on student learning with performance bonuses.

- A. Describe how the LEA identified learning loss, including among student groups most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time such as students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and migratory students.

**Elementary Schools**

In the primary grades, the 2021-2022 PALS scores for 1st, 2nd, and selected 3rd grade students showed us specific areas of weakness in greater numbers of students than year’s past. On the whole, significantly more students have been identified as qualifying for PALS services. Incoming first grade reading scores across Wythe County dropped an average of 2.1 text levels during years affected by COVID (equivalent to a 1/2 year regression). Incoming second grade reading scores dropped an average of 7.6 text levels during school years affected by COVID (equivalent to almost a ¾ year regression). The vast majority of our elementary students also experienced losses in the areas of alphabet knowledge (identification, formation, and letter/sound relationship knowledge) and in word knowledge (sight vocabulary recognition and writing vocabulary). Looking at individual criteria on the PALS assessment, our district noted a significant discrepancies in phonological awareness and specific skills related to phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Teachers also used running records to find appropriate text levels for all Kindergarten through 2nd grade students. This collective set of data collected in our elementary schools indicate a severe and urgent need for intensive remediation and intervention methods with many of our students, much more than in a typical year. Scores on our lowest students also indicate a decline in general book knowledge.

WCPS also observed a significant loss in math in grades 3-8 since 2019. The learning disruption caused a loss of basic skills necessary to be successful in math. SOL scores from Spring 2019 and the Spring of 2021 showed decreases among cohorts. Eighth graders showed an 11.09% percentile decrease from sixth grade. An even larger gap appeared between third and fifth grade with a 22.9% decrease among the cohort. The 2019 fourth grade cohort showed a deficit of

23.68% as sixth graders. First through third graders' formative data shows regression in basic math skills such as numeracy and conceptual understanding in comparison to pre-COVID years.

### Middle and High Schools

In addition to the statistics analyzed above, grades 6-12 learning loss was also determined by analysis of data from the following sources:

- \*Course grades/classroom performance from SY20-21 and SY21-22.
- \*Spring 2021 SOL Scores and 2021-2022 SOL scores
- \*Middle School Fall 2021 and Fall 2022 Student Growth Assessments
- \*Reading Comprehension Programs (Lexile Level Tracking)
- \*Quarterly Benchmarks

Despite the numerous waivers and remedial hours devoted to High School students, the graduation index has dropped since the Pandemic. Wythe County had a 96% on-time graduation prior to the pandemic and has unfortunately declined over the past two pandemic graduating cohorts. Most recent data show the subgroups of Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, and Female students presenting the greatest regression. To put this into perspective, WCPS had 128 high school students attend its 2021 Summer Learning program in which students recovered 158 credits towards graduation. Even with this success, WCPS high school principals still reported on students who remained behind and not on-track to graduate on time as of the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year because of the pandemic. However, that number decreased as the 2021-2022 school year progressed and WCPS was able to provide in-person 100% of the school year. Recent graduation data indicates WCPS must place a greater concentration on drop-out prevention. For example, the ESY 2021-2022 SRC List of Potential Drop-out report grew to 27 students which is a significant increase from the 12 reported on the ESY 2020-2021 SRC report.

In addition to monitoring longitudinal student achievement data, Central Office Administrators have conducted several listening tours throughout the school division to gather qualitative data on needs assessments of our schools following the re-opening of our schools during the pandemic. Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators continue to report a significant increase in the occurrence and intensity of disruptive behaviors upon return to school-based learning in elementary students. These behaviors surround difficulties adjusting to a regular schedule and following routines, transitioning to non-preferred tasks, and compliance in small group settings. Students are more likely to display regressive or dangerous behaviors-such as tantrums and physical aggression, which interrupt learning for all students at a time when learning academic recovery is critical. It is assumed the more relaxed and self-directed environment of being home over the pandemic has contributed to difficulty in adjustment to a more structured environment. An increased number of students are not being able to process and possesses the necessary coping skills when faced with adversity. Quantitative data is not available for this increasing dilemma, such as Discipline Log data, because school administrators are not treating it as discipline, but rather an opportunity to teach students appropriate behaviors in the moment. However, this is a barrier to what teachers are trying to accomplish in the academic setting. As a result, WCPS has identified a need for additional resources to be able to work with these students before or after school. Additional time is needed outside the traditional academic setting for students to acquire the coping and SEL processing skills they need to adapt better in school.

- B. Provide a detailed description of how the LEA used or will use the funds it reserves to implement evidence-based interventions to address learning loss.

As a result of what has been outlined above, WCPS has identified a significant need for additional time outside of the regular school year for Grades PK-12 to address specific learning gaps associated with unfinished learning due to the pandemic. Funds have been and will continue to be used to provide additional learning opportunities for identified students to receive these extra services not available during the regular school year. Students are identified based on their lack of growth as indicated by cumulative data collected using various sources from 2019 to the present.

**Summer Learning Program:**

Due to teacher burn-out and pandemic fatigue, WCPS prioritized an attractive pay-scale for teachers and support staff to come back and teach during the summer to fulfill the needs of our students. In order to attract the instructional support required to fulfill the needs of the Summer Learning Program, WCPS based the summer salary scales on the hourly wage of a mid-career employee (hourly pay for a 15-year educator).

- C. Describe how the LEA produces evidence of the effectiveness of evidence-based learning loss interventions employed.

WCPS identified learning loss related to COVID-19 disruptions and determinations were made based on several factors and numerous data points such as PALS, Student Growth Assessments, Lexile Text Levels in Middle and High Schools, 2021 and 2022 SOL scores, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Benchmarks, etc. Student performance during school years affected by COVID is monitored on a continuous basis and compared with longitudinal data from pre-COVID instructional years.

- D. Amount of ARP ESSER funds to address learning loss.

\$1,589,375.13

**Section 6: Other Uses of Funds**

Section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act permits LEAs to use the ARP ESSER III funds not reserved to address learning loss to address needs arising from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, allowable ESSER activities must meet the guidelines below.

- The use of funds must be intended to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students;
- The use of funds must fall under one of the authorized uses of ESSER funds; and
- The use of funds must be permissible under the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200). In particular, the use of funds must be deemed necessary and reasonable for the performance of the ESSER award.

- A. Describe how the LEA used or will use funds to support teacher and staff retention and recruitment strategies.

Indirectly, WCPS has hired personnel to support teachers through SEL and reading intervention personnel. These positions were hired to provide help and assistance for teachers post pandemic where needed.

a. Total number of new staff hired with ARP ESSER-14

b. Plan to retain staff hired with ARP ESSER funds after September 30, 2024.

These additional positions, if warranted and valid, will be budgeted in future budgets. Some of these new positions are already partially S.O.Q .mandated and required.

B. Describe the extent to which the LEA used or will use ARP ESSER funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning.

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. Wythe County Public Schools will use approximately \$6,128,785.00 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies as described below.

Architect and Engineering Fees associated with the development, planning, and installation of an HVAC system in Scott Memorial Middle School. The fees associated with Architectural and Engineering services are needed in order to ensure HVAC design and installation fully utilizes necessary system components related to Needle Point Ionization and maximum fresh air turnover within the HVAC system of the facility. This, in turn, reduces the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and supports student health needs. The costs associated with the contracted installation of the HVAC system for Scott Memorial Middle School. The fees associated with Architectural and Engineering services are needed in order to ensure HVAC design and installation fully utilizes necessary system components related to Needle Point Ionization and maximum fresh air turnover within the HVAC system of the facility. This, in turn, reduces the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and supports student health needs.

At present, Scott Memorial Middle School exists as a standalone facility located on a twelve (12) acre campus adjacent to the Wythe County Public Schools bus and maintenance lots. It currently serves 344 students from the Wytheville attendance area in grades 6 through 8. The main structure was constructed in 1952 with an addition in 1970 and a partial renovation consisting of new lockers, new furniture, new restroom partitions, and a new kitchen and dining room in 2003. The school originally housed Scott Memorial High School which served as a regional high school for African American students prior to integration. Following the integration of schools in Wythe County, Scott Memorial became an Wythe County Public Schools intermediate school for Wytheville area students in grades 5-7. During this time, the addition was added to expand capacity and ease overcrowding. This grade structure was maintained until Wythe County Public Schools adopted the middle school concept in 2003 when it transformed into its current iteration, Scott Memorial Middle School. The main portion of the building housing SMMS is approximately 70 years old with the newer addition being 50 years of age. While the building has been well maintained, the structure itself has many deficiencies including some asbestos ceilings, tile, and mastic, foundation settling, inadequate electrical and plumbing, and no HVAC system. Approximately half of the classrooms are undersized which strains instruction and does not fully meet the needs of the

teachers and students. The challenges presented by these facility shortcomings are a struggle to overcome in the best of times, but they have become especially daunting during the pandemic. Our faculty, staff, and students have been wonderful in terms of following all mitigation strategies from masking to hand washing. However, social distancing is very difficult considering the constraints of the building. Ventilation within the building and classrooms is also a hurdle to overcome when balanced against the ever present safety concerns that schools face. While there are numerous issues associated with the physical plant, additionally, location is another challenge concerning Scott Memorial. Wythe County Public Schools operates three high schools and three middle schools. Two of the high schools and middle schools share a common campus which allows middle school students attending these schools easy access to fine arts, vocational, and advanced science and math offerings. Because of location, WCPS is able to stretch funding to offer a more robust curriculum without duplicating faculty, staff, and facilities. George Wythe High School and Scott Memorial Middle School are the exception. Because they do not share a common campus, Scott Memorial students must be bused to George Wythe High School for standard course offerings to eighth grade students. Conversely, faculty must travel from GWHS to SMMS for some sixth and seventh grade courses. While having staff travel between schools is not ideal, busing students is far from it. The eighth grade students are bused to GWHS because of limited and, in some cases, inadequate or nonexistent facilities at SMMS. This has become problematic with limited space on buses for adequate social distancing. Renovation of the existing building housing Scott Memorial Middle School could address some of the aforementioned deficiencies. However, the need to bus students or have itinerant faculty would still exist without expending substantial limited resources in order to duplicate faculty, staff, and facilities on a campus of limited size. With that noted, a constructed addition of Scott Memorial Middle School adjacent and connected to George Wythe High School would address each of the stated issues while best utilizing the resources at Wythe County Public Schools disposal. George Wythe High School is situated on a campus of approximately 40 acres. The renovated structure has a functional capacity of 650 students and a current enrollment of 425 students in grades 9 through 12. There is more than adequate space to accommodate for social distancing that has become the norm during the pandemic. There is also ample space to construct a connected facility. A newly constructed SMMS would be able to utilize recently installed substantial infrastructure upgrades on the George Wythe campus, not least of which would be ample electrical supply needed for an HVAC system. The costs attributable to the installation of an HVAC system in new construction is less than those associated with the installation and retrofitting of the same system within an existing structure as the former has the system integrated into the design, while the later requires the architect and contractor to bend the system to the facility. This allows for budgets to be stretched further by avoiding the limiting factors inherent in a renovation project. Installation of an HVAC system with enhanced fresh air intake and exchange, as well as Needlepoint Ionization to reduce the risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs would be optimal.

- C. If the LEA used or will use ARP ESSER funds for HVAC, renovation, or other capital projects, describe each project, including whether the LEAs has requested and received [approval](#) for the project

Currently the SMMS project has been approved and this is Wythe County School's only project at this time. Please see letter B. narrative above for letter C.'s answer.

- D. If the LEA used or will use ARP ESSER funds for uses other than those listed above, describe below



N/A

E. Amount of ARP ESSER funds for the uses above (A. through D.) \$6,128,785.00

**Section 7: Budget**

| <b>Category</b>                  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Learning Loss Y/N</b> | <b>Budget</b> | <b>Amount Obligated</b> | <b>Amount Spent</b> | <b>Amount Remaining</b> |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Summer School                    | Classroom Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Nurses, Bus Drivers, Guidance Counselors, & Program Coordinators for Summer School Program geared toward learning loss                   | YES                      | 613,555.22    | 613,555.22              | 613,555.22          | 0                       |
| Year Round School                | Speech Therapist, School Counselor, Reading Specialist, English Learner/ Gifted & Talented Teacher, Paraprofessionals – Extra staff targeting learning loss                     | YES                      | 630,300.00    | 630,300.00              | 386,343.00          | \$243,957.00            |
| Summer School                    | Fixed charges for Classroom Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Nurses, Bus Drivers, Guidance Counselors, & Program Coordinators for Summer School Program geared toward learning loss | YES                      | 49,745.86     | 49,745.86               | 49,745.86           | 0                       |
| Summer School                    | Additional Costs Associated with Summer Boot Camp to target learning loss.  | YES                      | 180,000.00    | 180,000.00              | 0                   | 180,000.00              |
| Year Round School                | Fixed charges for Speech Therapist, School Counselor, Reading Specialist, English Learner/ Gifted & Talented Teacher, Paraprofessionals – Extra staff targeting learning loss   | YES                      | 295,774.05    | 295,774.05              | 40,000.00           | 255,774.05              |
| HVAC/Renovation/Capital Projects | Costs associated with A&E Fees, HVAC, and Capital Improvement of SMMS   | NO                       | 6,128,785.00  | 6,128,785.00            | 0                   | 6,128,785.00            |
| Choose an item.                  |   | Choose an item.          |               |                         |                     |                         |
| Choose an item.                  |   | Choose an item.          |               |                         |                     |                         |
| Choose an item.                  |   | Choose an item.          |               |                         |                     |                         |