



# Wythe County Public Schools

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G. Wesley Poole, Ed.D  
DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT

## WCPS ARP ESSER 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**. Wythe County Public Schools has been awarded \$7,892,554.91 in ESSER III funds. This plan describes how the awarded funds will be used. Questions about this plan should be directed to G. Wesley Poole, Ed.D. 1570 West Reservoir Street, Wytheville, VA 24382 (276) 228-5411.

### 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. 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

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.

### **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. Wythe County Public Schools will use approximately \$1,583,769.91 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds to address unfinished learning as described below.

Funds will be utilized to pay the following salaries to plan and implement activities related to summer learning programs and learning loss due to COVID closures: 123 classroom teachers to provide classroom instruction and remediation to mitigate learning loss due to COVID closures; 23 paraprofessionals to support instructional programming and meet IEP accommodations; 10 nurses to implement mitigation strategies and monitor health and well-being of students and staff; 30 bus drivers to safely transport students to and from summer instruction; 8 guidance counselors to provide SEL support, monitor behavior, and support communication and scheduling between school and home; 13 program coordinators to supervise arrival and dismissal of students, assist administration with additional duties associated with the summer instructional program, provide classroom instruction and remediation to mitigate learning loss due to COVID closures, and communicate with parents and guardians.

One School Counselor to provide SEL support, monitor behavior, and support communication and scheduling between school and home at the high school level due to increased social and emotional learning needs brought about by the pandemic and COVID closures. Additionally, responsibilities will include career counseling, graduation progress monitoring, and post-graduation planning. One Speech Therapist to provide services to students eligible for speech due to increased referrals and caseloads exacerbated by learning loss due to COVID closures. One Reading Specialist to assist schools with improving student learning. The Reading Specialist will assist teachers in disaggregating data, designing instruction, coordinating remedial instruction, assist administrators in planning professional development, and create a cohesive reading instructional plan across the division targeting students who are not reading on grade level due to learning loss associated with COVID closures. One English Learner/Gifted and Talented Teacher to meet the needs and close the gaps in our EL population due to COVID closures, work with identified students, as well as assist with screening, assessing, and parental involvement. The position will also work with the K-8 Gifted and Talented Coaches to improve instruction for our GT population. These two groups were impacted by the COVID school closures and need assistance. 6 Paraprofessionals to support instructional programming and meet IEP accommodations due to increased referrals and caseloads due to COVID school closures and learning loss.

#### **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. Wythe County Public Schools will use approximately \$180,000 of its ARP Act ESSER III funds in accordance with Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act as described below.

WCPS will contract with a School Mental Health Specialist to provide ten month (180 days X 3) pilot services for school-based, in-person counseling to students with mental or social/emotional health needs due to COVID closures. Contractor will be licensed for independent practice by the Virginia Department of Health Professions and maintain proof of malpractice insurance. No benefits are attached to the contract. Services will be delivered in half-day, three hour segments (8:00-11:00 AM, 12:00- 3:00 PM), with regular service rotation among schools with one school counselor. Contractor will follow Wythe County Public Schools calendar.

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

Wythe County Public Schools will provide interventions to meet the varied needs of all our students. Academic needs will be determined by using data to customize instruction for small groups and individuals. Interventions include, but are not limited to PALS, tutoring, during the school day remediation, after school remediation, and one-on-one support. English learners will have an EL teacher to provide instruction and extra support. A Reading Coach will support teachers, students, and schools to review data and guide instruction. The coach will also provide support to our students of color and economically disadvantaged who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID 19. Mental Health supports will include school counselors, school social worker, and a School Mental Health Specialist. Students will be provided supports at school and home. Coordination with the local Mt. Rogers Mental Health District will also occur.

#### **Section 6: Consultation with Stakeholders and Opportunity for Public Comment**

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Wythe County Public Schools conducted consultation in the following ways:

- With stakeholders, including: students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions - The Wythe County School Board began their process of discussing ESSER III funds on April 8, 2021. The topic of ESSER III was included in their Discussion section, and there was a public comment afforded to all for the April 8, 2021 School Board Meeting. Additionally, the School Board recessed at the conclusion of this meeting to reconvene for a Work Session on April 13, 2021 to discuss in greater detail the FY 21 Budget, FY 22 Budget, ESSER II funds, and ESSER III funds. Next, the School Board held a joint meeting with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors to discuss the FY 22 Budget, ESSER II and ESSER III funds on April 22, 2021. The School Board placed ESSER III in the Information section of their August 12, 2021 agenda, where there was a public comment section afforded to all. The School Board had the ESSER III plan on the agenda for their meeting on September 9, 2021, and public comment was afforded. On July 12, 2022, bids were opened for the Scott Memorial Middle School project. The accepted low bid was \$27,050,000.00 from R.L. Price Construction. This was approximately 8.5

million dollars over the original projected/estimated project price. This elevated bid/construction price was due to labor, supplies, and materials due to the post Covid-19 inflation era. At the regular scheduled school board meeting on July 14, 2022 the public was offered public comment and information was presented regarding the Scott Memorial Middle School project. Also on July 14, 2022, when the information was presented to the school board and the public, it was discussed that the Fort Chiswell Middle School/High School projects would be eliminated and ESSER funds moved to accommodate the additional costs associated with the Scott Memorial Middle School project. After the public comment period and informational time during the regular scheduled meeting on August 10, 2022, the School Board voted to amend the ESSER application to remove the Fort Chiswell Middle/High School projects from the ESSER application and reallocate those funds to the Scott Memorial Middle School project.

- With Tribes (if applicable); civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and 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 students -The Wythe County School Board began their process of discussing ESSER III funds on April 8, 2021. The topic of ESSER III was included in their Discussion section, and there was a public comment afforded to all for the April 8, 2021 School Board Meeting. Additionally, the School Board recessed at the conclusion of this meeting to reconvene for a Work Session on April 13, 2021 to discuss in greater detail the FY 21 Budget, FY 22 Budget, ESSER II funds, and ESSER III funds. Next, the School Board held a joint meeting with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors to discuss the FY 22 Budget, ESSER II and ESSER III funds on April 22, 2021. The School Board placed ESSER III in the Information section of their August 12, 2021 agenda, where there was a public comment section afforded to all. The School Board will have the ESSER III plan on the agenda for their next meeting, September 9, 2021, and public comment will be afforded to all as well; and
- By providing the public the opportunity to provide input. The Wythe County School Board began their process of discussing ESSER III funds on April 8, 2021. The topic of ESSER III was included in their Discussion section, and there was a public comment afforded to all for the April 8, 2021 School Board Meeting. Additionally, the School Board recessed at the conclusion of this meeting to reconvene for a Work Session on April 13, 2021 to discuss in greater detail the FY 21 Budget, FY 22 Budget, ESSER II funds, and ESSER III funds. Next, the School Board held a joint meeting with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors to discuss the FY 22 Budget, ESSER II and ESSER III funds on April 22, 2021. The School Board placed ESSER III in the Information section of their August 12, 2021 agenda, where there was a public comment section afforded to all. The School Board had the ESSER III plan on the agenda for their meeting on September 9, 2021, and public comment was afforded to all, as well and taking such input into account. All input was taken into account. After the bid opening on July 12, 2022 the public and school board offered public comment, discussion, and the opportunity for questions regarding ESSER plan. These opportunities were afforded to the public and the school board on the following meeting dates: July 14, August 10, and September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### **Section 7: Making the Plan Available to the Public**

Wythe County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at [https://p16cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_433895/File/21-22%20Documents/WCPS%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan.pdf](https://p16cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_433895/File/21-22%20Documents/WCPS%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan.pdf)
- The plan is available in multiple languages and will be provided upon request.
- 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.