



CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (CRRSA) AND AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

Planned Use of Funds

Below is a summary of the planned use of \$157.3 million of CRRSA and ARPA Federal Funds by the Syracuse City School District.

Most of this funding will be used to address student learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including initiatives and activities to support students in their core subject areas. Funding will also support academic intervention, family engagement, student support services and other academic and social-emotional needs. To ensure that our schools are safe and healthy places for students to learn, a portion of funds will support our facilities and maintenance, including air filtration systems and a progressive security program in our schools; as well as technology support to ensure that all students have access to the technology necessary to help them achieve their best. A remaining portion of funding will support professional development, which will ensure a personalized and rigorous instructional program which creates equitable and accessible opportunities for all students. In addition, funding will be allocated to continue the District's efforts for recruiting a diverse teaching staff.

LEARNING

\$67.9 MILLION

Math Intensive

\$21.7 Million

In order to support the acceleration of learning in mathematics for students who may have experienced interrupted teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District is implementing a Tier 3 intervention program. This program will provide teachers and teaching assistants with appropriate training on effective mathematics instruction. Our goal is to ensure that teachers are well-trained to minimize the amount of time a student needs Tier 3 instruction, allowing us to identify clear goals for students and help them build concepts and skills at a more accelerated pace.

In addition, the District will implement a similar intensive **Math Support program K-12**, which includes the addition of 53 positions for instructional support and repurposing 5 existing positions as Math AISTeachers and tutors. We will offer additional professional development for Math intervention staff and will purchase several new digital content and software programs for Math Labs; as well as new Math Manipulatives, new Fluency Kits and content-specific grade level intervention supplies.

Reading Intensive

\$17.7 million

To help identify and address gaps in reading skills, the District will implement a Multi-Tiered system of reading supports to ensure student success in grade level curriculum and assessments, ultimately increasing the likelihood of later school success for students. This system will include evidence-based curriculum and instruction at all levels; universal screening of all students; evidence-based, instructional interventions at targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) levels provided to each student who needs them; progress monitoring for learners who are achieving below expectations; and data-based decision-making throughout the system. This large-scale process includes numerous steps to support a more culturally responsive curriculum, including the creation of an Inclusion Team, a diverse group of leaders to help guide the way we select curriculum.

In addition, the **Early Literacy initiative**, that since its inception has shown progress, will receive additional funding, allowing the addition of 18 instructional support positions, tutoring, supplies and new Independent Reading Classroom Libraries for grades K-5.

Summer School

\$12.1 million

To help fill the achievement gap exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the District offered Full-Day Extended Summer School in 2021, including both in-person and virtual summer school classes. In summer 2021, two weeks were added to summer school, providing more time on task. Afternoon enrichment programs were offered for grades K-8. High school 11th and 12th graders had an opportunity to attend classes on the Onondaga Community College campus, providing them with college exposure and experience. The District plans to continue offering more robust summer school offerings in the coming years, as ARPA funding is available.

Virtual Academy

\$7.7 million

In response to students and families who have thrived and want to stay in remote learning, the District plans to open a Virtual Academy to students who have completed middle school. These secondary school students who prefer to learn remotely, need access to courses not offered in their home school, and/or need a virtual credit recovery option not available in their home school, will be offered the Virtual Academy option expected to open in September 2022. This Virtual Academy will use personalized learning plans to allow for a truly personalized learning experience. Teachers will work together in teams to ensure each student meets and exceeds academic and personal goals and requirements. The Virtual Academy will include a full support team including teachers, Library Media Specialist, ENL teachers, Special Education teachers, counselors, instructional coaches, and tutors.

Other

\$8.7 million

Special Education

Students with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the school interruptions caused by COVID-19. Funding will allow the District to make facility renovations to add sensory rooms, add additional teachers and teaching assistants, order sensory building supplies, add a sensory room and playground at McCarthy at Beard, and expand special class offerings at the high school level. Additionally, funding will allow the District to support students over the age of 21 who may be in need of recovery, as the New York State Education Department is allowing overage students whose programming and services were unable to be completed due to COVID, stay an additional year in high school.

English as a New Language (ELL) Literacy

Funding will allow the District to support progress monitoring in language and literacy development, including purchasing resources to support personalized learning, development of reading skills, vocabulary acquisition and language skills fluency.

Social Studies and Civic Engagement

Funding will allow the District to accelerate learning in social studies and civic engagement. It will restore funding for classroom supplies reduced in recent years, allowing teachers to access additional classroom materials; and will also provide the opportunity for students to experience field trips to the Onondaga Historical Association for an enrichment museum studies project, a new African American history trip to Washington DC, new 3rd grade field experience to Strong Museum in Rochester and restoration local field trips including Law of Peace Center and the Erie Canal, among others. Field trips and experiences allow students to practice speaking and listening skills that are necessary for college, career and civic life thus focusing on clear and concrete disciplinary literacy skills as aligned to the New York State Social Studies Framework and NY Next Generation Literacy Standards.

Project-Based Learning and Advanced Placement

Project-based learning, a method of exposing students to interdisciplinary concepts by taking ownership over their own learning, is a particularly effective way to engage students actively. Research indicates increased achievement outcomes through this method of instruction. Advanced Placement (AP) coursework prepares high school students for the rigors of postsecondary work. The combination of project-based learning and AP coursework has shown to be incredibly effective, particularly for students of color and student from low-income households. Funding will allow the District to expand AP course options in high school, as well as project-based learning across grades Pre-K-12, allowing the District to enhance students' preparedness for high school and postsecondary work by offering multidisciplinary, hands-on instruction combined with rigorous curriculum.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL**\$53.8 MILLION****Attendance Initiatives****\$2.3 million**

Chronic absenteeism is a major hurdle that can be mitigated by providing focused support to SCSD families. Students involved in focused outreach efforts are easier to engage or reengage in the learning process, adding to the likelihood of increasing retention and graduation rates, particularly if the need for outreach is immediately identified. Research suggests impacting chronic attendance issues as early as elementary school can increase student's academic success throughout their academic career.

To help get kids back to school and build strong relationship with families to increase engagement, the District will hire 17 additional Program Aides in the Office of Family Engagement (one for each school). We will also implement a "Check and Connect" model of reducing absenteeism, which utilizes mentors or liaisons to monitor students' progress and work alongside families to improve attendance. Funding will also enable the District to pay for additional staff to perform outreach after school hours during the entire year.

Social-Emotional Learning**Culturally Responsive Education Training****\$1.1 million**

The District will offer extensive professional development on Social-Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Education protocols for instructional staff, leaders, student support staff and others.

Staffing**\$38.6 million**

The District has developed a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) which is an evidence-based approach to comprehensive program delivery that addresses academic and behavioral challenges that can impede learning. At the center of the MTSS are school counselors, social workers and psychologists. To support students and families, this funding will allow us to expand our Student Support Services Department, which currently employs more than 250 individuals – including Psychologists, Psychologist Interns, Counselors, Social Workers and Social Work Assistants. In order to expedite the District's long-term plan to add guidance counselors for all elementary schools, 16 new guidance counselor positions were added with the CRRSA funds.

Contract Services**\$7.0 million**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inequities that hold many students back, with school closures proving especially disruptive for children from lower-income families, who are disproportionately likely to receive mental health services exclusively from schools. Both CRRSA and ARPA funding will allow the District to partner with community agencies and groups, working together through a collaborative and comprehensive approach to have the most positive impact on the academic and wellness outcomes of our students. These partnerships will assist in identifying students needing the most intensive support and will help students and families with services such as health care, housing and food assistance as well as counseling and crisis intervention.

Resources**\$4.8 million**

To support student mental health and social-emotional wellbeing, the District will purchase and utilize culturally appropriate books and materials and will provide space for students, staff and families to gather. This funding will enable the District to purchase textbooks, materials, tools, book studies, and resources to provide Peace Corners and to enhance availability in libraries and family engagement spaces. Our goal is that these culturally relevant materials will help students promote empathy and unity; promote cross-cultural friendships; help students look critically at the world; and will help encourage identity formation.

AIR QUALITY, HEALTH & SAFETY**\$15.2 MILLION**

To ensure that schools are safe and healthy places for students to learn, funding will be used for air purifiers and filters; HVAC controls; window replacements, custodial staffing and security. While air purifiers are already present in classrooms, the District will add more air purifiers to small spaces, such as guidance, social worker and other support service offices, where staff meet and the District will purchase larger air purifiers for large spaces like gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, and libraries. We will also replace windows at Franklin, Meachem, Montessori at LeMoyne, Salem Hyde, and Van Duyn schools; and replace carpet in 200 classrooms at several schools across the District with a floor tile material. This funding will also support HVAC upgrades for 15 buildings and the NOC Network Operations Center.

Five additional custodians are added with CRRSA funds in order to assist with sanitizing and disinfecting our facilities to lessen the spread of germs in our school buildings.

Additionally, taking temperatures when staff, students and visitors enter our school buildings remains a priority in the Syracuse City School District. Using handheld devices proved to be inefficient during the morning intake of students so each school will be provided mounted temperature taking devices that work with the wave of a hand to determine if someone has a high temperature and may need further medical attention.

We are launching a progressive security program, Special Patrol Officer, that will allow for the hire of retired police officers to work in our schools and at our extra-curricular events. There is a shortage of officers in the Syracuse Police Department limiting their ability to commit full-time school resource officers. We believe this program will enhance our current security plan at a time when more resources are needed to safely return students to in-person learning.

TECHNOLOGY

\$16.6 MILLION

As part of an initiative to ensure that each high school student has access to a digital device, the District will purchase additional laptop computers and hotspot devices for all incoming freshmen for the next three years while ARPA funding is available.

Computer replacement and related technology investments are included in the District CRRSA plan to replace classroom equipment that was deployed during COVID-19 closure to staff and students. Much of the technology deployed was near end of useful life. This will also replenish laptops, WIFI hotspots and charging stations for mobile devices for remote learning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

\$3.8 MILLION

To improve the quality and effectiveness of curriculum writing, the District will partner with Buck Institute for Project Based Learning Works. We will also partner with agencies such as Hill Pedagogies, Instructional Coaching Group, and College Board to improve the quality and effectiveness of both school leaders and instructional staff. This funding will also support ongoing paid professional development to instructional coaches to lead professional development sessions, as well as support the addition of five new Technology Integration Specialists to assist staff with the use of technology and software.

CRRSA funds will be used to support the Syracuse University Urban Fellowship Program. This program funds the tuition for teachers working in the Syracuse City School District while working on their master's degree. The program has a city residency requirement and a long-term teaching commitment to the SCSD. This program has been successful in ensuring a diverse candidate pool and teachers ready to teach in an urban setting.

We pledge to invest the CRRSA and ARPA funds in a responsible, equitable manner to serve all Syracuse City School District children. It is our belief that by investing these short-term federal funds to provide intensive academic support and an all hands-on-deck approach to Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health well-being, that staff and students will be Stronger Together.