



## AGENDA

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

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

Katie Bielski-Medina, Chairperson  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Larry Davis  
John Krings, President  
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz  
Julie Timm

March 4, 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. Stronger Connections Grant
- V. Updates
  - A. Families and Schools Together (FAST)
  - B. Play and Learn at Pitsch Early Learning Center
  - C. ESSER III Formula Grant Spending Summary
- 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.



## AGENDA

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

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

Katie Bielski-Medina, Chairperson  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Larry Davis  
John Krings, President  
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz  
Julie Timm

March 4, 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
- IV. Actionable Items

### A. Stronger Connections Grant

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was signed into law by President Biden on June 25, 2022. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) was allocated \$12.5 million to administer a BSCA Stronger Connections competitive grant to high-need Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to support safe and healthy students. The purpose of the BSCA Stronger Connections Grant is to support Local Education Agencies to establish safe, healthy, and supportive learning opportunities and environments for students.

Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services and his team submitted an application for the competitive grant and WRPS was awarded \$400,000.00 to implement the plan outlined in the application. Some of the Action Steps outlined in the plan are to continue our partnership with Gaggle Therapy and other mental health providers, continuation of the implementation of TIER I Social and Emotional Learning resources that follow the WRPS Multi-tiered Systems of Support, continue our partnerships with Families and School Together (FAST) and Playworks, work with professional staff members to complete the Trauma Resilience Certification through the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point along with other action steps that support the work the district has outlined in its Strategic Plan. In addition, this competitive grant requires Equitable Services for private schools. The necessary paperwork was collected prior to grant submission and WRPS will provide ongoing consultation with the three private schools who have opted into participating in the grant funding. The annual award is effective on February 1, 2024 through September 30, 2026.

**The administration recommends approval of accepting the \$400,000.00 grant award as outlined in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act - Stronger Connections Grant.**

V. Updates

A. Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Families and Schools Together (FAST) is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program shown to help children succeed at school by building stronger, more supportive relationships at home. Wisconsin Rapids Public School District has implemented the program in four of the elementary buildings - Pitsch, Grove, Howe, and Washington. FAST activities are designed to strengthen family bonds, empower parents, increase positive communication and improve the child's overall academic performance and emotional functioning. Teri Thomas, the District 4K Coordinator and Student Engagement Facilitator at Pitsch, will provide an update of the program to the committee.

B. Play and Learn at Pitsch Early Learning Center

The WRPS Play and Learn is a collaboration between 4K teachers and the Special Education Team. Play and Learn provides some school experience to general education students in our community who may not be enrolled in a 3K or 4K program. In addition, it provides an alternative general education setting for 3 - and 4-year-olds with special needs to receive special education services. Ms. Thomas will provide the committee with an update of the Play and Learn program that is implemented at Pitsch Early Learning Center.

C. ESSER III Formula Grant Spending Summary

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 are to be expended by September 2024. The District is on track to meet this deadline. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will share the District ESSER III Summary Report along with the plans to wrap up the grant and answer any questions the committee may have. The report is included as Attachment A.

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:

- Start College Now (SCN) and Early College Credit Program (ECCP) Applications (April)
- Career and Technical Education Updates (April)
- Student Code of Conduct (April)
- K-12 Revised Art Curriculum Maps (May)
- K-12 Art Acquisition Request (May)
- District Professional Development Plan (May)
- 2024-25 Professional Development Calendar (May)
- 6-8 Science Acquisition (June)



# **ESSER III Summary Report**

***February 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 83% (\$4,973,515.07) 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.

Furthermore, the district wisely allocated funds to hire additional classroom teachers, reducing class sizes over three years. Over the course of three years, 23 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.

## **Next Steps**

All ESSER III Formula Grant Funds are to be expended by September 2024. The District is on track to meet this deadline. A strategic objective is to utilize a portion of the remaining 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; therefore, all classroom teaching positions and Special Education Support Aide roles, initially added through ESSER III funding, will remain intact for the immediate future. Some of these positions have been made "permanent" through attrition in regards to retiring or resigning teachers. While the Student Engagement Facilitator positions will see a reduction from 9.25 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) to 5.75 FTE, aligning closely with pre-COVID-19 levels designated for Instructional Coaches, the district is committed to ongoing monitoring of class sizes in the upcoming years to maintain an optimal student to teacher ratio.

## Reports

The following graphs outline the fiscal reports detailing how the ESSER III Formula Grant dollars have been spent during the 3-year period of the grant.

### Expenditure Totals as of February 1, 2024

Totals	
<i>Personnel</i>	\$4,645,091.38
<i>Purchased Services</i>	\$981,734.92
<i>Non-Capital Objects</i>	\$256,863.82
<i>Capital Objects</i>	\$117,651.48
<i>Special Education Indirect costs</i>	\$23,000.00
<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>\$6,024,341.60</b>
Allocation Amount	<b>\$7,082,465.00</b>
Left to Encumber	<b>\$1,058,123.40</b>
<i>Building Designations Remaining</i>	\$32,000.00
<i>Morning Jumpstart</i>	\$82,000.00
<i>Software Subscription Renewals</i>	\$345,000.00
<i>Ongoing expenses (WLPCC, Internet, etc.)</i>	\$10,000.00
<b>TOTAL Possible Upcoming Expenditures</b>	<b>\$469,000.00</b>
<i>Remaining for Indirect costs</i>	<i>Could claim UP TO \$739,730.32 for Regular Education Could claim an additional \$70,201.28 for Special Education</i>
Remaining	<b>\$589,123.40</b>

The following charts break down the expenditures by topic

**Personnel**

<b>Personnel</b>			
<b>Regular Education</b>			
<b>Classroom Teachers to reduce Class size</b>			
	Salary	Fringe	Total
	\$2,014,339.88	\$1,155,023.29	<b>\$3,169,363.17</b>
<b>Interventionists</b>			
	\$268,279.50	\$164,386.25	<b>\$432,665.75</b>
<b>Other improvement of Instruction</b>			
Student Engagement Facilitators			\$186,984.18
Mentors for New Hires			\$16,660.00
Substitute costs			\$15,169.07
ESL Teacher			\$139,996.43
Bridge Program teacher - stipend			\$2,288.00
Common School fund Management			
Stipend			\$1,717.00
Family Engagement Stipends			\$430.26
Health Aide			\$18,800.81
			<b>\$382,045.75</b>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$3,984,074.67</b>
<b>Special Education</b>			
	Salary	Fringe	Total
Special Education Program Aide	\$367,768.18	\$285,046.77	<b>\$652,814.95</b>
Special Education Specialty Teachers	\$5,516.00	\$2,685.76	<b>\$8,201.76</b>
	\$373,284.18	\$287,732.53	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$661,016.71</b>
		<b>Personnel</b>	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,645,091.38</b>

## Purchased Services

<b>Purchased Services</b>	
Therapy	\$147,525.80
Internet Services to Families + Kajeets	\$17,159.49
Software for Instruction	\$461,151.83
Instructional Staff Training	\$84,621.87
Noninstructional Staff Training	\$3,951.44
Morning Jump Start	\$214,245.90
Remodeling	\$29,744.44
Zoom/Software to communicate between school and home	\$13,466.50
Resource for Graduating Seniors / Signal Vine	\$3,466.00
Cab Vouchers	\$160.00
Field Trips (virtual and in person after COVID)	\$526.00
Miscellaneous	\$5,715.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$981,734.92</b>

## Non Capital Objects

<b>Non-Capital Objects</b>	
Hygiene/Medical/Health Room Supplies and Equipment	\$53,531.36
Books/ Workbooks/ Textbooks	\$96,961.63
Desks/manipulatives/supplies/storage/cards/chair bands	\$103,674.63
Interventions	\$664.20
	<b>\$254,831.82</b>
<b>Special Education</b>	
Instructional Media	\$1,562.77
Supplies	\$77.24
Technology	\$391.99
	<b>\$2,032.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$256,863.82</b>

## Capital Objects

<b>Capital Objects</b>	
<b>Regular Education</b>	
Educational Technology - LU Projectors	\$91,006.84
Remodeling	\$24,453.00
Water cooler bottle fillers	\$2,191.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$117,651.48</b>