Excel Academy Charter (District)

Plans for the Use of ESSER III Funds:

The United States Department of Education (USED) is requiring two plans from all recipients of ESSER III funds:

1) A plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services
The requirement for this plan is likely **met by your District Reopening Plan** submitted to DESE in August of 2020, along with any subsequent amendments (see Tab 3 Assurances). It will need to be revisited and revised as necessary every 6 months, including soliciting stakeholder input and considering changes to CDC guidance.

2) A plan for the Use of ESSER III Funds, based on broad stakeholder input, and addressing the following:
- The district's **prevention and mitigation strategies**, including extent district has adopted CDC recommendations **(Step 4.4)**
- How the district will use its **20% reservation of ESSER III funds to address loss of instructional time** with evidence-**based interventions (Step 4.2 and Tab 6, Budget)**
- How the district will spend the remainder of its ESSER III funds for **allowable expenditures (Tab 5) and budget (Tab 6)**
- How the use of ESSER III funds will respond to the **academic, social, emotional and mental health needs** of all students, especially **those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19** pandemic **(Tab 4.2, Tab 4.3)**, including:

  - students from low-income families
  - students of color
  - English learners
  - students with disabilities
  - students experiencing homelessness
  - students in foster care
  - migratory students
  - students who are incarcerated
  - other underserved students

This application, when fully and thoughtfully completed, along with your District Reopening Plans, will constitute the plans required by USED. These plans must be published on your website and must be accessible to families in a language they understand, either translated in writing or orally, as well as in an accessible format for those with disabilities.

You should expect that DESE will be collecting data and other information from you as a result of implementation of your plans for and use of ESSER funds.

Step 4.1 of 4.4	ESSER III regulations require that the stakeholder groups below be meaningfully consulted as part of the planning process for use of ESSER III funds. Which of the following groups have you consulted with? (check all that apply)		If you have not yet consulted with this group in planning for use of ESSER III funds, when and how do you plan to get their input?
	☐	Students	Student Focus Groups - Jan-Feb '22
	☐	Families	Family Survey - Jan - Feb '22
	☑	School and District administrators, including special education administrators	
	☑	School leaders	
	☐	Teachers	Staff Survey - Dec '21 - and Focus Groups - Jan-Feb '22
	☐	Other educators	Staff Survey - Dec '21 - and Focus Groups - Jan-Feb '22
	☐	School staff	Staff Survey - Dec '21 - and Focus Groups - Jan-Feb '22
	☐	Unions representing educators and school staff	n/a
	☐	Tribes*	n/a
	☑	Civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations)*	
	☑	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.*	

TIP: The cells in the right column will be red until you either 1) check the box next to the stakeholder in the left-hand column or 2) write your plan to consult the stakeholder group in the left-hand column.

*To the extent present in or served by the district

Step 4.2 of 4.4	**Evidence-Based Strategies, Interventions, and Supports:** Describe how ESSER III funds, including the required 20% reservation, will be used to respond to students' social, emotional, and academic needs through *evidence-based* interventions, how progress will be measured, and how/if chosen interventions address disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved subgroups. Select from the following list of evidence-based interventions and provide a narrative at the bottom of this step for any of your district's evidence-based initiatives that are not listed. *Note: Your district's 20% reservation to address loss of instructional time must be spent on evidence-based interventions.*

Enhanced Core Instruction	Our district is using ESSER III funds for this strategy	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.
Expanding access to full-day, high-quality prekindergarten	Select	Select		
Purchasing and/or expanding use of high-quality, aligned instructional materials (any content area) and associated professional development	Yes	Yes	Performance on interim and final assessments, performance on MCAS (absolute and SGP)	Yes. Over 60% of our students are from low-income families, 20% are students with disabilities, 10% are English learners, 60% come from families where English is not the first language, and 90% identify as students of color. We are a single-school district. Therefore, nearly every student that Excel serves is otherwise "underserved" and will benefit from implementation
Professional development for teachers and administrators re: culturally responsive teaching	Yes	Yes	Educator surveys	Yes, see above. We plan to continue to engage Grading with Equity consulting services to provide PD for a large share of our educators.
Screening assessments and associated professional development (e.g., early literacy screening)	Select	Select		
Expanding access to career-technical education (including "After Dark" district/vocational partnerships), innovation pathways, and advanced placement courses (including fee subsidies and teacher training)	Yes	Yes	AP course enrollment and grades, AP test performance	Yes. See above. We will fund our AP courses, including teacher training and fees
Extending the school day/year and prioritizing student access to additional time by student need	Select	Select		
Tutoring programs and support, including early literacy tutoring (including training paraprofessionals) and peer tutoring programs.	Select	Select		
Developing or strengthening data cycles to facilitate and inform student learning and associated professional development and support personnel	Select	Select		
Early college programs, particularly those focused on students underrepresented in higher education	Yes	Yes	Participation in early college overnight and other visit programs	Yes. See above. Students were unable to participate in our extensive college access programs in person during the pandemic closures. We will provide additional access to early college experiences, including our college overnight and other visit programs.

Targeted Student Supports	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.
Developing or expanding high quality co-teaching and inclusion models for students with disabilities and associated professional development	Select	Select		
Acceleration academies (during school year vacations) and summer learning opportunities for individualized instruction and enrichment	Yes	Yes	Participation in and academic outcomes from summer learning programs	Yes. See above. We will expand our existing summer programming opportunities for students for additional instruction, enrich
Language support programs, including dual language and heritage language programs (students learning in-home/native language) and associated professional development	Select	Select		
Community-based afterschool programs for parents, including citizenship and ESL classes	Select	Select		
Dropout prevention and recovery programs	Select	Select		

Talent Development and Staffing	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.
Academic support staff, including academic coaches, interventionists, student teaching residency programs, paraprofessionals	Yes	Yes	Observational data, retention data, conversion to teachers	Yes. See above. We will hire additional Teaching Fellows to provide extra in-class support by diverse teacher trainees. We will
Diversifying the educator workforce through recruitment and retention strategies	Select	Select		
Strategies to staff hard-to-staff schools and positions with high-performing educators	Select	Select		
Increasing staff and opportunities for arts, enrichment, world languages, athletics, and elective courses	Yes	Select	Enrollment in arts, electives courses & participation in athletics	Yes. See above. During pandemic closures, our students were unable to participate in many of the arts, electives, and athletics
Increasing high-quality common planning time for teachers and academic support staff	Select	Select		
Developing leadership pipeline programs for schools	Yes	Yes	Hiring and retention data, data on transition of leadership fellows to permanent leadership roles	Yes. See above. Hiring of diverse leadership fellows and similar roles, who will provide extra support to schools and serve as a

	Our district is using ESSER III funds for:	This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact	What data will you use to measure progress?	Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.
Labor-management partnerships to improve student performance	Select	Select		

Conditions for Student Success – Social/Emotional and Mental Health Supports	**Our district is using ESSER III funds for:**	**This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact**	**What data will you use to measure progress?**	**Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.**
Increasing personnel and services to support holistic student needs, including school guidance and adjustment counselors, nurses, psychologists, and/or social workers	Yes	Yes	Hiring data, student behavior data	Yes. See above. We will use funds to hire and provide additional nursing and mental health professionals/services to students.
Building/strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations to increase student/family access to services for mental/physical health and well-being	Select	Select		
Working with community-based organizations that provide enrichment during the school day and/or out of school time	Select	Select		
Arranging for wraparound services to be provided at schools	Select	Select		
Engaging community partners to build capacity among educators and support personnel to implement equitable and culturally responsive learning environments	Select	Select		
Create transitional programs, partnering with community based organizations, for students with mental health or behavioral-related absences returning to school	Select	Select		
Parent-teacher home visiting programs to build positive relationships between home and school	Select	Select		
Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments	Select	Select		

Other interventions/Strategies/Supports *Use this section to describe evidence-based strategies your district will fund with ESSER III that are not listed above*		**This strategy will address pandemic-related learning loss/disproportionate impact**	**What data will you use to measure progress?**	**Does this strategy/intervention address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved student subgroups (each major racial and ethnic group, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care)? If yes, please explain which group(s) are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how this strategy/intervention will provide support.**
Retention bonuses for staff (pursuant to written bonus plan)		Yes	Hiring and staff retention data	Yes. See above. We plan to use funds to provide retention bonuses to staff to ensure that we can fill and keep filled hard to fill positions. The pandemic has created a tight (and in some cases untenable) labor market for many positions, which has had the effect of leaving some positions unfilled and students under-served.
		Select		
		Select		
		Select		
		Select		
		Select		

Step 4.3 *of* 4.4	**Equitable Use of ESSER III Funds**

How is your district taking educational equity into account when planning for expending your ESSER III funds?
For example,
1) allocating funds both to schools and districtwide activities based on student needs, and
2) implementing an equitable and inclusive return to in-person learning by, for example, avoiding over-use of exclusionary discipline and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

(1) Excel Academy is a single-school LEA
(2) Our return to in-person learning plan has focused on ensuring that students are supported heavily during their return to school. We have invested heavily this year in additional supports, funded by ESSER I and ESSER II, and which will be funded by ESSER III in future years. These include (1) a larger number of on-site health and mental health professionals, (2) more in-class Teaching Fellows, Instructional Monitors, and Leadership Fellows to ensure intensive adult supports by an increasingly diverse staff of educators, (3) funding for PD that focuses on inclusive, positive instruction for all learners that is centered on DEI principles. We will also use funds to cover the costs of extracurricular, leadership groups, and athletic teams that are important opportunities for students to engage with peers joyfully and with adult supervision.

Step 4.4 *of* 4.4	**CDC School Safety Recommendations** *This information will come from your District Reopening Plan as well as any supplemental/revised reopening policies for your district.*

TIP: Note that your district is not required to adopt CDC school safety recommendations to receive ESSER III funds. This data is being collected for reporting purposes.

	CDC Recommendation	Does your district have a policy or policies on this topic?	If "Yes," is it described in your District Reopening Plan?	If you have a policy but it is not described in your District Reopening Plan, please briefly describe here.
1	Universal and correct wearing of masks	Yes	No	Excel requires universal mask-wearing inside all school buildings. All students and staff members regardless of vaccination status, are expected to wear a mask indoors. Masks are not required outdoors for anyone.
2	Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding)	Select	Select One	The size of Excel's school buildings makes implementing physical distancing infeasible when operating at full student capacity.
3	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Select	Select One	While not a written policy, hand sanitizer is widely available and used frequently at all schools.
4	Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	Yes	Yes	
5	Contact tracing, isolation, quarantine in collaboration with health departments	Yes	No	Excel follows state guidelines for contact tracing and exclusion from school for individuals who have COVID symptoms or are exposed to someone known to have COVID.
6	Diagnostic and screening testing	Yes	No	Excel implements an on-site COVID testing program sponsored by DESE. This involves weekly routine COVID testing of and diagnostic testing.
7	Efforts to provide vaccination to school communities	Yes	No	Promotion of vaccination through: dissemination of information about COVID-19 vaccination via electronic emails, text messages, social media, and phone; establishment of practices that facilitate access to vaccines.
8	Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	Yes	No	Exemptions for mask-wearing are available to students who cannot wear a mask due to behavioral or medical reasons.
9	Coordination with state and local health officials	Yes	Yes	