



ESSER III (ARP) Application Funding

Las Américas ASPIRA Academy received \$1,973,063 in ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS (ARP ESSER). These federal funds were provided to states and school districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of school and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our students. LAAA's plan for ARP ESSER funds supports activities through school year 2023-2024.

General Uses of ESSER III Funds

Please describe the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies on each of the following health and safety strategies:

Universal and correct wearing of masks: At LAAA, we implemented universal facemasks as part of our safety protocols. All students, team members and other individuals allowed on our school campus were required to wear a facemask inside and outside the school building. The protocols included the correct wearing of these face masks per CDC guidelines. We plan to continue these protocols in the 2021-2022 school year if necessary to keep our school community safe and healthy.

Physical distancing: At LAAA, we implemented physical distancing as part of our safety protocols. All students, team members and other individuals allowed on our school campus were required to follow this protocol inside and outside the school building. This protocol was adjusted from 6 feet to 3 feet per CDC guidelines. We also created two cohorts (Blue Wolves and Gold Wolves) of students at the East Campus (K-8) to accommodate physical distancing. We are hopeful that we will be able to return to school in the Fall of 2021 on a full-time and full-capacity level.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette: At LAAA, we implemented frequent handwashing or sanitizing as part of our safety protocols. Teachers incorporated hand wash/sanitization procedures in their daily routines with students. Our Facilities Team installed sanitizing stations throughout the school building to support these healthy practices. We plan to continue these protocols in the 2021-2022 school year if necessary to keep our school community safe and healthy.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities: At LAAA, we expanded the cleaning and sanitizing practices of our school facilities as part of our safety protocols. Our Facilities Team revised their daily schedule and assignments to ensure classrooms, cafeteria tables and other common areas were wiped down and sanitized after usage. These practices were also followed by our bus drivers, teachers, team members and students. Everyone pitched in to keep our school community safe and healthy.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine: At LAAA, we implemented contact-tracing procedures to determine if/when isolation or quarantine is warranted. Our Director of Human Resources and School Nurse worked closely with the Department of Health to make sure COVID exposures or infections were reported immediately. We also established protocols to ensure the necessary information was communicated to the proper stakeholders in a timely manner. We plan to continue these protocols in the 2021-2022 school year if necessary to keep our school community safe and healthy.

Diagnostic and screening testing: Students and team members who are not vaccinated are required to participate in weekly testing. Testing is provided and completed on site.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: At LAAA, we have kept our team and families informed of the availability of vaccinations throughout the state. Information from the State was shared immediately with the school community so everyone could take the necessary action for vaccinations. We are doing our part to encourage all team members to be vaccinated. Our rate of vaccination is 89.29% at this time.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies: At LAAA, we have provided our students with disabilities (SWD) the necessary accommodations to support their health and learning. Most SWD were able to attend in-person learning four days a week during the hybrid periods. For those opting for remote learning, our Regular Education teachers, Special Education teachers, School Counselors and Interventionists, supported them. Our School Nurses worked closely with students to support their health needs.

How will the LEA ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?

- In addition to the regularly provided ESY summer instruction and summer camp program, this summer LAAA will offer an accelerated learning program with bus transportation provided for students who need intervention and support to reduce learning loss. It is the plan to continue these services for the following two summers as well. Credit recovery is being provided to high school students for English and science.
- Free summer meals are being served at both campuses during the summer months for students engaged in summer programs on campus.
- Professional development will be provided for teachers in differentiating instruction so that when students return to school in the fall teacher have strategies to provide instruction for students based on their needs.

- A program has been purchased for SEL instruction next year in K-8. Teachers will be provide training to deliver lesson to students in whole group and small group instruction. At the high school, the Freshman Seminar class will continue to have a focus on SEL supports for students. The weekly high school huddle meetings will also focus on school wide SEL supports. In addition to the counselors who are employed by ASPIRA, we will be contracting with an outside agency for additional SEL and counseling supports.

The extent to which and how ARP ESSER funds will be used by LAAA to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent guidance:

LAAA will be offering on-site, rapid antigen testing for both students and staff using the state of DE provided vendor. In addition, we will continue to require regular testing of all team members and students who are not vaccinated. In the event a student or staff member tests positive LAAA has hired synchronous learning teachers to support students, who are not able to attend school due to illness, need to quarantine, having a family member who is immunocompromised, etc. Students will not have to worry about not receiving instruction and adding to the learning loss from previous remote/hybrid learning.

How will LAAA use the mandatory 20% set aside to address the academic impact of lost instruction time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions?

LAAA will be using the 20% set aside for learning loss to provide summer accelerated learning opportunities for students in reading, writing and mathematics. Funds will be used to pay teachers to provide instruction focused on the identified needs of students. Smarter Balanced Assessment data show that remote/hybrid learning has affected the reading and mathematics achievement of the students who were assessed in the spring of 2021.

In addition, LAAA has hired a speech therapist to support students with speech needs. During the pandemic, this was one of the most difficult supports to provide students as remote learning provided challenges for students and therapists. Having a speech therapist on staff will allow LAAA to provide more intervention and speech therapy to address the speech loss that resulted from the pandemic.

How will LAAA use the remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with the statutory requirements?

Funds will be used to support programming for middle and high school students to develop the skills and strategies to be successful in high school. LAAA will collaborate with LYTE to provide after school, during school and summer programs as well as mentors. Cohorts of students will work together and with their mentors to navigate the challenges of high school. Students will also work with their mentors to understand the college application process and be college ready. This program will support low-income, African American and Latino students.

A student's experience and success in school is influenced by many factors beyond the school walls—such as nutrition, health, safety at home and in the neighborhood, and access to enriching

experiences in the school and community. LAAA will hire a Safety and Relations Coordinator who will be dedicated to addressing these factors. The Safety and Relations Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating the collaboration of schools, families, and community partners in support of students. The Safety and relations Coordinator will teach the Freshman Seminar class as one of his responsibilities. This course focuses on SEL and school success topics such as: collaboration, setting life goals, forging your identity, responding to conflict, and understanding mindset.

How will LAAA ensure that the ARP ESSER funded interventions, including but not limited to the 20% set-aside, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including students from low-income families, students of color, English Learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students?

Routine assessments (NWEA and local benchmark assessments) will be completed at least 3 times a year to assess the efficacy of the programs, interventions, and supports being implemented and to ensure student growth. Data maintained by the counselors, Climate and Culture team, and the Safety and Relations Coordinator around the frequency of behavioral supports needed will be monitored bi-weekly. Intervention plans will be updated using the MTSS process.

Describe the promising practices LAAA has implemented to accelerate learning:

For literacy instruction grades K-8, LAAA used the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) Summer School Curriculum units that include researched based teaching methods, tools, and resources. The units provided students with new content designed for summer that was explicit and culturally responsive. It focused on foundational reading skills like phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and fluency and strategies to transfer those skills into their independent reading. The LAAA High School offered English 9 Credit Recovery that specifically focused on the following standards (RI.2, RI.4, RL.4, W.2, W.7, L.4, SL.1, SL.5). For math instruction K-8, LAAA used the Zearn Summer Series purchased by the Delaware Department of Education. The units focused on the current grade level for attending students to help make content connections they might have missed during the school year. LAAA also offered a Social Emotional Lesson during morning meeting time for students in elementary grades and targeted small groups, including one-to-one support, for students in middle school.

Identifying the needs of underserved students

Las Américas ASPIRA Academy’s highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	<p>132 students tested ELA proficiency 23.1%. Consistent with state results for SY21 Math proficiency 5.3%. LAAA students performed below the state (11.3%) Both of these areas are high priorities for LAAA. While the ELA score does not reflect a difference from the state percentage this is well below the expected benchmark proficiency. Scores for both ELA and math show a discrepancy between all students and those identified as low income. All proficiency scores are lower than in previous years' data</p>
Students from each racial or ethnic background used by the State for reporting purposes – please add a row for each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	<p>ELA black proficiency = 37.8 which is greater than the ALL proficiency. This is 7% lower than white students. ELA Hispanic proficiency = 28.5%. This is 3% lower than the ALL proficiency. This is 16% lower than white students ELA multi-racial proficiency = 16.7% which is 25.7% lower than the state and 28% lower than white students. Math black proficiency = 17.6% which is lower than the ALL proficiency by 2%. This is 19% lower than white students. Math Hispanic proficiency = 15.8% which is lower than the ALL proficiency by a little less than 4%. This is 21% lower than white students. Math multi-racial proficiency = 16.7% which is 8.9% lower than the state and 20% lower than white students. All proficiency scores are lower than in previous years' data</p>
Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)	<p>ELA female proficiency = 36.6% which is 7.9% lower than the state but 6% higher than the ALL data for LAAA ELA male proficiency = 25.1% which is 11.1% lower than the state and 6.6% lower than the ALL data for LAAA Math female proficiency = 18.2% which is 7.4% lower than the state and 1% lower than the ALL data for LAAA Math male proficiency = 20.2% which is 6.7% lower than the state but 1.1% higher than the ALL data for LAAA All proficiency scores are lower than in previous years' data</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
English learners	<p>ELA ELL proficiency = 9.8% which is 2.9% lower than the state and 30% lower than non-EL students who tested this spring</p> <p>Math ELL proficiency = 6.9% which is 1.1% lower than the state and 20% lower than non-EL students who tested this spring</p> <p>All proficiency scores are lower then in previous years' data</p>
Children with disabilities	<p>ELA SWD proficiency = 12.9% which is higher than the state by .8% yet 23% lower than non-SWD students who tested this spring</p> <p>Math SWD proficiency = 5.8% which is 2.1% lower than the state and 16% lower than non-SWD students who tested this spring</p>

Because of the highest priority needs the following areas have been identified as focus areas for ARP ESSER funds:

\$610,771.93 in funds will be used to support learning loss by:

1. Providing students with summer accelerated learner opportunities. Teachers and paraprofessionals will be paid stipends to provide programming to support students in accelerating their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Students will be identified through the MTSS process and assessment data.
2. Contracting with LYTE to provide support for middle and high school students. LYTE programming will include after school, during school, and summer activities to support students in preparation for the rigors of high school. LYTE will: provide students with mentors who will provide tutoring and support for academic achievement; support students in preparation for assessments by addressing gaps in learning/understanding; build skills in listening and communication; and support students in developing and implementing personalized learning plans.
3. Hiring a full time speech therapist. One of the services that was most difficult to deliver during remote/hybrid learning was speech therapy. Hiring a speech therapist who serves only LAAA students will increase the services provided to students and reduce the impact that remote/hybrid learning had on students with speech needs.

\$1,112,981.38 in funds will be used to support the needs of children by:

1. Hiring a special education teacher to provide push in and pull out services for students identified with disabilities. The special education teacher will work with the general education teacher to provide instruction aligned to the goals and needs identified in the IEP.
2. Hiring synchronous learning teachers to provide direct instruction for students who are not able to be in school due to illness, in quarantine, have extenuating circumstances related to the pandemic, and have an extended absence from school.

\$249,309.69 in funds will be used to support other operation needs by:

1. Hiring a safety and relations coordinator who will review safety protocols in the school, mentor students, identify needs of families and seek resources to support them. Collaborates with the Climate and Culture team to implement SEL, teach Freshman Seminar class to support students in transition to high school, strategies to get disengaged students engaged, and keep students in school.