

MINERAL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Plan for the ARP ESSER FY'22

(America's Rescue Plan the Elementary And Secondary Emergency Relief Fund)



Submitted to the
Nevada Department of Education
September 10, 2021

LEA Contact: Mr. Andre' Ponder, Superintendent

Mrs. Kathy Trujillo, Grants Manager

Telephone: 775-945-2403 Extension 4

Email address: trujillo.kathy@nvmcsd.org

To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.

LEA Representative

Mr. Andre' Ponder, Superintendent

Date

INTRODUCTION

and

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT'S CURRENT STATUS AND NEEDS

Mineral County School District consists of four school sites in central rural Nevada. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the county had a population of 2,613 residents with a median household income of \$35,806. Our District serves approximately 600 students from Grades Pre-K through 12.

In March of 2020 all schools were forced to close for the remainder of the year due to COVID-19. As the summer passed and the new school year arrived, Mineral County adjusted its instructional opportunities in the following ways: Full-time in-person instruction, hybrid models, distance learning, online learning, and school closures during times of significant spread of the coronavirus.

July 1, 2021, marked the Superintendency of Mr. Andre' Ponder at Mineral County School District. Mr. Ponder joined Mineral County School District at the cusp of another year marked with mitigation strategies due to COVID-19 and the Delta variant.

There has been a significant effort to gather, analyze and synthesize information to prepare this plan. Mineral County School District acknowledges that this is a live document and adjustments will be made as conditions change and needs emerge.

~~

A. Stakeholder Engagement

Mineral County School District has begun and will continue to develop best practices for meaningful stakeholder engagement. Meetings were held over the summer to create "wish lists" for the District's ESSER funds. As the program priorities began to emerge, this plan continued to be discussed among the Superintendent's Cabinet, with the School Board Members, Administrators, and various stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement was held at the site level and among student "Ambassadors" at the secondary level.

B. Overall Priorities

1. Addressing the Achievement Gap (Learning Loss)

Addressing the impact of interrupted learning is a top priority for Mineral County stakeholders and decision-makers. Mineral County School District will be offering various opportunities to address learning loss due to the pandemic at each of the school sites. The District will also leverage 21st Century grant funds to provide quality after-school programming through the Mason Valley Boys and Girls Club. The recruitment and hiring of highly-qualified staff and the

implementation of evidence-based programming will take place for all school in the district.

Mineral County High School will be offering after-school tutors in addition to digital credit recovery opportunities, dual credit classes, and helping students shift from remediation to acceleration. The District's plan will focus on elementary and junior high school students who were previously not proficient and will need individualized attention to get back on track to proficiency. The District will support an evidence-based summer learning and enrichment program at all sites.

2. Providing High-Quality Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP).

A comprehensive SISP program will help identify students in need of targeted support and services. We will identify which students have lost the most significant number of in-person instruction days since the beginning of the pandemic. Identifying students at most risk of dropping out due to learning loss will occur with referrals to our State-supported Adult Education program.

The District will explore the implementation of tracking software and curriculum that will support students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs. The District will leverage School-Based Mental Health Services grants and community outreach programs to fill any gaps in the SISP program. The District will ensure all students have access to nutrition services. Due to our designation as a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school, all students receive free breakfast and lunch at all schools. Student transportation needs are being considered in various ways, including consideration of Federal Infrastructure Funding opportunities.

3. Developing a Rigorous Needs Assessment that Includes a Root Cause Analysis

Mineral County School District is proposing outsourced, Nationally-credentialed consultants to assist in developing a needs assessment. Anticipated outcomes include recommendations on providing quality evidence-based interventions, strategies, and activities that demonstrate a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes. Professional development is included as a part of the overall strategy.

The District is also aware of the need for sustainability as we undertake efforts to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. Long-range planning considers that these are one-time emergency funds and that district resources will need to be leveraged to sustain certain efforts.

4. Safe Reopening of Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

Mineral County School District recognizes that maintaining safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and well-being. The District will support our sites by providing appropriate PPE for staff, students, cleaning and sanitization supplies, and maintaining proper ventilation. The District's School nurse (and proposed aide) and the local Emergency Management/Public Health Department will assure that contact tracing, combined with isolation and quarantine, will follow best practices and any other CDC guidelines and/or recommendations. The nurse will also collaborate with others to address COVID diagnostic and screening testing and vaccine information. The District will also provide appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities (SPED) concerning health and safety policies.

5. Supporting and Stabilizing the Workforce

Mineral County School District realizes that the pandemic has taken a toll on Nevada educators, classified staff, and students. Our District continues to experience difficulty in hiring staff at all levels. The ESSER Plan includes several highly qualified staff positions that are already filled or that we anticipate can be filled to provide instructional and support services to our students. In addition to our constant recruiting efforts, Mineral County School District's Superintendent proposes a retention bonus to be distributed to every employee in service on November 1, 2022. The retention bonus program is separate from other district efforts to attract high-quality personnel, including reimbursement of moving expenses, hiring stipends, and a proposed "step" increase program that is currently in the developing stages.

Quality Professional Development has been arranged with an expert traumatologist to help the workforce understand how trauma affects them personally, influences the student body and community. The District will continue to provide additional and sequential trainings throughout the remainder of the year. The well-being and safety of our staff is the highest priority.

6. Facility Maintenance and Capital Improvements

Some of the oldest school buildings in Nevada are located in Mineral County (both in service and vacant). Although the primary priority of our initial allocation is closing the learning gap, many stakeholders recognize the need to look to the future beyond the pandemic. We will be discussing site improvements that will propel the Mineral County School District into the next era of safe operations. Our ongoing work will be to balance the competing priorities of immediate needs and long-term building improvements.

We have made significant strides in technology but still have a few gaps as the pandemic hinders in-person gatherings and travel. Purchasing "roving" tech

equipment to offer professional development, webinars, and other training opportunities will enhance our options.

Shoring up the Student Center at Mineral County High School to include more space for online learning will support digital learning, dual credit opportunities and an increased focus on literacy for years to come.

CONCLUSION

In the future, Mineral County School District will continue to gather data on the impact(s) the pandemic has had and continues to have on our students and learning community. We will leverage outsourced consultants, experts within the Nevada Department of Education, neighboring school districts, the Nevada School Board Association, our staff, and the community who will assist us in making the best programmatic decisions and allocations to assure complete recovery from this challenging time.