

May 18, 2022

Dear Dr. Durán and Engage,

Arlington Parents for Education writes to provide feedback on APS' use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act/Elementary Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Funds.

First, thank you for soliciting feedback from the community this year. While true community engagement would entail a mutual exchange of ideas and information, and more than a week-long feedback window to allow for adequate time to respond, we nevertheless appreciate the opportunity. In the future, we suggest a longer time horizon for engagement coupled with public meetings during which APS and the School Board can hear directly from the community and work sessions for Staff and Board members to discuss information presented and feedback received, similar to budget or boundary work sessions that are routinely held.

Second, we again urge that the majority of federal rescue funds be used to address learning loss. As we wrote to you in September 2021, the literature on learning loss recovery, including here, here, and here, strongly suggests that effective learning loss recovery requires additional instructional time, including high-intensity tutoring (e.g., more than 3-days per week or for 50 hours over 36 weeks), extended instructional days (before and after school), extended school years, and double dose instruction. Last fall, an AASA survey of superintendents showed that 44% had already decided to use ARP/ESSER funding to offer high-intensity tutoring and 42% for added instructional time.

This school year, both Fairfax County Public Schools and Prince William County Public Schools offered tutoring and extended instructional time starting at the beginning of the school year. These school districts and others prepared detailed plans that focus on increased instructional time, such as FCPS's 46 page presentation and Prince William County's 41-page plan, the latter of which committed approximately 78% of its funding to addressing learning loss. This spring, FCPS announced free online and on-demand tutoring available to all students and will serve a larger than normal summer school class for the second year in a row.

Research indicates that effective high-dosage tutoring requires at least 50 hours per semester of tutoring, and can cost \$3800 per student to implement. APS' own dashboard reflects that there are 2,375 students in elementary schools requiring intensive support from the mid-term DIBELS testing. There are 891 middle school students scoring below basic on the Reading Inventory tests. And there are 3,435 students in elementary or middle school scoring below basic on the winter math inventory tests. We ask APS to commit an appropriate level of resources to meet this level of need.

Third, we ask APS to provide an update on what federal dollars were spent this year within each category of its revised application, what amounts remain, and to meaningfully engage with stakeholders to reallocate any remaining funds as APS indicated in its August 11 town hall last year it would do.

Sincerely,

Arlington Parents for Education

cc: Arlington School Board