



ROSELLE SCHOOL DISTRICT 12

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Dr. Mary Henderson, Superintendent

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To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Dr. Mary Henderson, Superintendent
Date: July 20, 2021
Re: Use of ESSER funds

As the Board of Education is aware, District 12 has received three rounds of ESSER funding. These federal funds are to be used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional requirement for ESSER III is that a minimum of twenty percent of the funds must be used to address unfinished learning. Our summer school program is an example of spending funds in that manner.

While grant fund expenditures are not required to be board approved and typically are not, there will be an action item on the agenda for the board's approval. Our administrative team and this Board of Education has committed to transparency to our community, and this aligns with that commitment.

We will be adding 1.5 FTE (certified staff) to address unfinished learning. These positions are not intended to be permanent. Since they are grant funded, they will be eliminated at the end of the grant unless the administrative team brings forth a recommendation to make them permanent. That type of recommendation would require board approval.

The first position (1.0 FTE) will be a math interventionist. The person in this position will work with students in need of a Tier 3 math intervention. That means in addition to classroom instruction (Tier 1) and intervention by the classroom teacher (Tier 2), the student needs a more personalized and intensive intervention. Mrs. Lynn and Ms. Petelle will work with grade level teams to identify these students and determine the appropriate intervention.

The second addition will be a 0.5 position at the middle school. In looking at data from the 2020-21 school year, we identified the students going into seventh and eighth grade who received D's and/or F's last year. Of these, there are 20-25 who received D's and F's in a majority (if not all) of their classes. I am beyond disheartened and disappointed that these students fell through the cracks and were not supported appropriately. These students were not identified by staff during regular MTSS meetings, nor was the sheer number ever identified by the RMS principal. The majority of these students do not perform below grade level on the assessments we use to monitor student learning. This means their failures are related to other causes such as attendance, work completion, etc. Students who fall into this category also typically do not have the types of connections and relationships with teachers that lead to student success.

We will be supporting these students (and students entering sixth grade identified as “at risk” for falling behind) during WIN time. We will have grade level student support groups that will include the following:

- Student goal setting
- Executive functioning skills
- Tutoring for academic content areas
- Creation of a supportive small group environment to foster connection and a sense of belonging at school
- Frequent, ongoing communication with classroom teachers
- Grade monitoring

Our current Spanish teacher, Nia Kerr, will be overseeing this intervention from creation to planning/implementing and monitoring. Her current 0.5 FTE will be raised to 1.0 in order to facilitate this support for students. She has demonstrated an ability to form strong relationships with students, has taught summer school, and worked as an assistant last year to support special education students. She will be working with Mrs. Lynn and me to formalize the program and will be ready to begin the first day of school.

While this is not related to the additional staff, I want to share that there will also be work done with the RMS staff on this issue. The sheer number of students on this D and F list reveal that this is not an individual student issue. This is a teacher mindset issue. It is inexcusable that our teachers did not intervene with these students given the amount of team time our staff have to collaborate and discuss students of concern. Nate and I have already discussed how we will be addressing the staff on this issue during August Institute Days. What I can share with the board is that the data will never look this way again. Student support and teacher evaluation will see to that, and that is going to be my message to the middle school staff.

The use of ESSER funds for these student supports are at the heart of their purpose. Our students overall have continued to learn and grow throughout the pandemic, and I believe that these “boosters” will allow us to close the gaps for individual students who did not thrive during this time.

Meaningful Consultation with the Roselle SD 12 Community:

The details of the district’s User of ESSER Funds plan are determined in part through regular meetings of the district’s COVID-19 Planning Team. In order to have representation from a broad range of employees, this team consists of members of the district’s senior administration team, building principals, teachers’ union leadership, classroom teachers and other certified staff, and other district employees. In order to meet the needs of English Learners, children with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness or in foster care, the administrators in charge of district EL, Special Ed, and McKinney-Vento programs are present at the table as well. This team makes recommendations to the superintendent and to the Board of Education for how to best leverage available ESSER resources in order to safely return to school and address student needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feedback will be elicited from families and community members via various surveys and public meetings/listening sessions. Decisions and recommendations made by the COVID-19 Planning Team will be presented publicly at meetings of the Board of Education and will be made available in electronic format on the district’s website. Public input is expressly welcomed and families and community members are encouraged to reach out to the superintendent or their building principal to ask questions and/or provide feedback.