

Proposal for ESSER Grant Spending

New Dawn Charter High School located at 242 Hoyt Street in Brooklyn, has been awarded \$895,481 through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which was signed into law by President Biden on March 27, 2021. This money is coming from New York State through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.¹

As part of our responsibility in receiving this money, we are requesting public comment to our spending plan. Under the CARES Act, this money can be spent on a variety of programs listed in Appendix A, attached at the end of this document. Further, we have a 20% set aside (\$179,096) which must be spent on learning loss due to the pandemic.

If you wish to comment on this plan, please send all comments to PubComment@ndchsbrooklyn.org

Subject Line: ESSER Fund Use

After surveying the needs of students and reviewing the needs of the school, we have determined that to combat learning loss, we will spend our 20% set aside (\$179,096) plus additional money on hiring an Outreach Team to work directly in the community with students who are not coming back to school and hiring another special education teacher. Attendance has taken the hardest hit at NDCHS. Once a student is in school we have many interventions for dealing with learning loss. However, if a student does not even attend school, we have no options. The students who are not coming back to school are many of the same students who struggled with remote instruction from September 2020 and June 2021. Of the 256 students who should return to in person schooling (remote learning is not an option in NYC), only 93 (or 36.3%) have returned to school as of our third week of school. This is an absolute tragedy and must be rectified immediately. That is 163 students who need to have home visits and meetings set up with parents. In most years we have counselors and other support staff conducting home visits, this year with the increase in mental health issues of the students who have returned for in person learning, we need to have these staff on site dealing with the students who are coming to school. Further, we usually have fewer than 20 students in need of home visits. We simply do not have the current staffing for this.

We are also proposing to hire another special education teacher to push into classes. Approximately 50% of the students at New Dawn are classified as students with disabilities. The New Dawn education model is a fully inclusive model, which means that we have no special education pull out classes, rather, special ed teachers push into classes. By hiring another SPED teacher, we will be able to assist all students with their learning loss.

Both these interventions align with funding category 16. This deficit is a direct result of students not being able to attend school, and those who do need added support. This is calculated at \$253,500 and meets the 20% set aside criteria for the school.

When staff returned for hybrid instruction last year, we watched as staff slowly became disengaged, disenchanting, fearful, and just depressed. Our staff is exhausted, there have been several resignations because of the determination to open school fully, and we need some method of reengaging and reinvigorating staff to face the new year. To this end we will spend

¹ More information can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/federal-education-covid-response-funding>

\$13,000 towards motivational professional development. This aligns with category 20 which will help us maintain staff who are considering leaving.

We are using the remainder of the funding, \$628,981, to reconfigure our current space to include a room for intervention for use to overcome the learning loss from the September 2020-June 2021 school year. We have no space for any physical activity, so we had planned to convert our computer lab into physical education space. However, with students coming back we need the computer room to remain for intervention programs such as READ 180 and Math 180 (both funded through out Title monies), but it is also very important that students have space for physical education. We have an empty room on the roof (the elevator leads to the roof so is ADA compliant) that can be converted to a physical education space and classroom. We also need to install pavers on the roof so that this space can be used for our outside space for PE classes. This falls into categories 16 and 20.

There is no doubt that we need the room for the added interventions we have for students returning after 18 months of remote or hybrid instruction. But just as importantly, we need the stand-alone classroom for PE classes, as well as the roof space. By freeing up space in the building, we can develop our interventions. Physical education has shown to impact the development of both academic and social skills by increasing oxygen flow, brain neurotransmitters, and neurotrophins which impact the brain's ability for higher learning.² Studies have shown that PE results in higher academic test scores. The CDC conducted a meta-analysis of 50 research studies (56% were on secondary schools) on the impact of physical education on academic performance and found that physical activity was positively related to academic achievement, academic behaviors, and indicators of cognitive skills such as concentration, memory, self-esteem, and verbal skills. 86% of the studies found at least one positive outcome.³

Further, the outdoor space would provide the Science classes with the necessary space they need for the weather station and greenhouse for horticulture. These activities will also provide support for learning loss since it was very difficult teaching these things virtually. Research has shown that many students need tactile activities (kinesthetic learning) for a strong connection with learning.⁴

These results show the importance of physical activity on academic performance, as well as increased opportunities for kinesthetic learning, both of which will help combat learning loss.

² Taken from <https://blog.schoolspecialty.com/physical-activity-affect-academic-performance/>

³ Taken from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf

⁴ Gadt-Johnson, CD & Price, Gary E. (2000). Comparing students with high and low preferences for tactile learning, Education, Spring, Vol. 120 Issue, 3, p. 581.

Appendix A

Funding Categories

1. Any activity authorized by ESEA, including the Native Hawaiian Education Act and the Alaska Native Education Equity, Support, and Assistance Act.
2. Any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
3. Any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
4. Any activity authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V).
5. Any activity Authorized by subtitle B of the title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento).
6. Coordinating preparedness and response efforts of LEAs with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.
7. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
8. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.
9. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs.
10. Training and professional development for staff of the LEA on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
11. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of the LEA, including buildings operated by such LEA.
12. Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the IDEA and ensuring other education services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.
13. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
14. Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence based full-service community schools.
15. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and enrichment and supplemental after-school programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.
16. Addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time among an LEA's students (including low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care) by: a) Administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable

to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including through differentiating instruction; b) Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students; c) Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; and d) Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.

17. School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.
18. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.
19. Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.
20. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in the LEA and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA.