

## **ESSER III 2021-2022 Safe Schooling Plan**

This document is to serve as the Ridgewood High School District #234 plan for the safe reopening of schools in the 2021-2022 school year. Likewise, the purpose is to outline how funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief will be used by the district. This plan focuses on four areas to ensure the safety of our students and staff as well as addresses learning loss that may have occurred during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The four areas of focus are Academic Supports, Social/Emotional Programs, Health/Safety Resources, and Capital Improvements.

**Academic Supports:** Research is clear, there is no substitute for a high-quality, in-person teaching experience to ensure student academic success. The global pandemic forced schools to provide instruction in a variety of ways (e.g. remote, hybrid, asynchronous, etc.). As we return to full-time in-person instruction we will:

- Use academic testing and baseline assessments the first two weeks of school to identify learning gaps
- Implement a tutoring program during the school day
- Implement intervention FlexTime periods for at risk students
- Use research-based curricular programs
- Purchase educational technology
- Address the needs of children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth
- Have after school support for students with learning gaps
- Provide students with dual credit opportunities
- Develop and implement differentiated lessons to meet students' needs
- Extend the school year to address learning loss

Notes: Our plan recognizes that no less than 20% of all ESSER III funds must be used to address learning loss. The cost interventions listed above comprise more than 20% of the funds granted. Likewise, we believe these supports are sustainable beyond the issuance of these funds and will continue to support students for years to come. Our district looks to partner with Educational Degree Programs at local universities and colleges to provide in-building, daily tutoring services. Likewise, we will continue offering after school tutoring from professional educators. We will continue implementation of our robust interventions during the school day to address any gaps that our students may be experiencing.

**Social/Emotional Supports:** We recognize that living through a global pandemic has taken an emotional toll on our students. It is clear that schools will play a vital role in helping students process their lived experiences and deal with any trauma the pandemic may have caused. As we return to full-time in-person instruction we will:

- Implement research-based SEL programs
- Provide social work support to students who experienced trauma
- Offer and promote extracurricular opportunities to students
- Provide professional development for teachers in the areas of social/emotional learning and trauma- informed strategies
- Provide parent learning opportunities to allow parents to support their children at home
- Revamp the advisory program and develop lessons to meet the SEL needs of all our students

Notes: We will continue to offer professional learning opportunities for our staff in the area of SEL to better support the learning of our students.

**Health and Safety Resources:** Health and safety of our students and staff is always our top priority. The COVID-19 Global Pandemic has taught us important lessons on how to ensure the safety of our students and staff. These include, but are not limited to cleaning protocols, hand sanitizing, physical distancing, and virus suppression. While the vaccine provides some sense of protection, we will continue to require additional safety measures for the 2021-2022 school year. As we return to full-time in-person instruction we will:

- Use EPA/OSHA approved cleansers for frequently touched surfaces
- Mask wearing protocols when required or necessary
- Training and professional development on sanitizing and virus transmission
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities
- Planning for long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students/families
- Implementing on-site diagnostic testing
- Increasing air turn over at the expense of energy efficiency
- Continue with plastic barriers until we are out of the pandemic with no phases

Notes: Schools play a major role in keeping communities safe. To that end, we will continue to follow both best practices and science when it comes to the health and safety of our students and staff. Many of the health and safety protocols put in place during the 2020-21 school year will continue into the 2021-22 school year.

**Capital Improvements:** The ESSER III funds provide districts with the opportunity to address structural issues that may need to be addressed within their schools. These capital improvements may help bridge the digital divide, improve the learning environment or make schools safer for students and staff. As we return to full-time in-person instruction we will:

- Improve air quality
- Repair/improve school facilities to reduce risk of virus transmission
- Purchase in-class technology to enhance instruction

Notes: We have learned a great deal from the global pandemic. The focus of our improvements will be on ways we can provide a safer environment and improving the tools in our teachers' hands. To that end, we plan to ensure each classroom has the necessary technology to implement engaging lessons to all students. We also plan on making the most of our large spaces (e.g. gyms and cafeterias) to allow for social distancing if necessary.

**Bell Schedule:** As a result of the pandemic, we learned about the continued need for flexibility. We have embraced the aspects that supported student learning and will continue to offer varied learning opportunities in the 2021-2022 school year.