



Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Plan

SEPTEMBER 20-JUNE 30

**Texans Can Academies
Education Department**

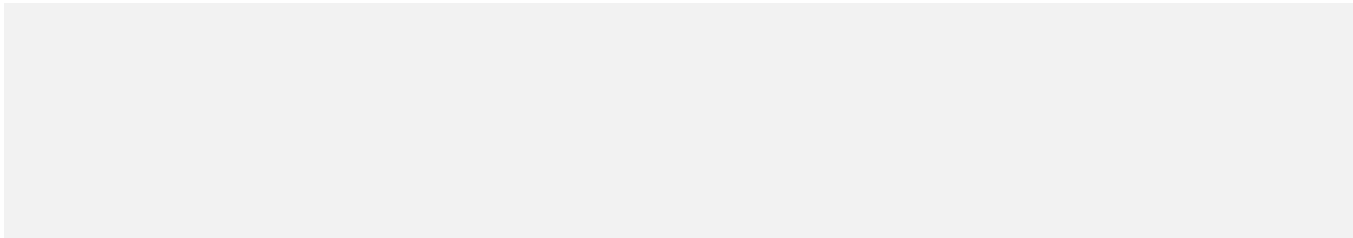


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Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Grant III (ESSER III) was authorized in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), signed into law March 2021. Texans Can's initial allocation of \$8,470,506 is available immediately, and an additional \$4,235,253 will be available Fall 2021. This document outlines the use of these funds for Round 1 and Round 2.



Purpose

The purpose of the ESSER III funds is to respond to the pandemic and address student learning loss needs. Educational agencies may use these funds to “reimburse” themselves or supplant their budgets for funds spent in the past related to the required domains. This ESSER III plan includes an initial allocation of \$8,470,506 available immediately (Round 1) and an additional \$4,235,253 available Fall 2021 (Round 2).

Required Domains

Four domains are required:

1. Health and safety related to COVID-19 (CDC guidelines)
2. 20% set aside to address the academic impact of lost instructional time
3. Interventions responsive to all students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, particularly those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
4. Plan for the remainder of the funds

Meaningful Consultation with Stakeholders

The Texas Education Agency requires that Texans Can’s ESSER III plan be based upon meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Texans Can has engaged stakeholders in three ways: (1) the ESSER Planning Committee, (2) a survey seeking stakeholder feedback, and (3) student re-engagement.

First, the ESSER Planning Committee includes the following individuals:

5. Dr. James Ponce, Superintendent
6. Marian P. Hamlett, Chief Financial Officer
7. Cynthia Miles, Chief of Staff
8. Stacy Venson, Special Education
9. Tanya Browne, Special Education
10. Dr. Jose Luis Torres, Mental Health and Wellness
11. Scott Barrow, Facilities
12. Norma Allen, Human Resources
13. Kimberly Spivey, Career College and Military Readiness (CCMR)
14. Dan Cahalen, CCMR
15. Joseph Mena, Education

Second, Texans Can sent a survey to students, parents, staff, trustees, and some community members. Texans Can received over 2,500 responses. The survey results indicated that the plan should focus on three key areas: (1) academic support for learning loss, (2) CCMR and (3) students' emotional health and wellness. Additionally, several respondents encouraged Texans Can to pay a retention stipend in recognition of the difficulty of the past two school years. A summary of the survey may be found in the Appendix.

And lastly, Texans Can has engaged a company, Graduation Alliance, to aid in re-engaging students who have fallen behind or who have excessive absences. When Graduation Alliance connects with a student, they ask the same questions found in the survey.

Priority 1: Health and Safety

Texans Can’s “I Can Return” plan will be updated to reflect the latest CDC guidelines and will be brought to the August board meeting for public comment and review. Texans Can’s priority for health and safety will be air-quality improvements, personal protective equipment, and continued but modified screening process. Texans Can has changed its screening process to include smart scanners and thermal imaging stands.

Activity	Round	Amount
Air Quality Improvements, Existing HVAC Units, Plasma Air Ionizers, HEPA Filters, Outside Air Economizers, Building Improvements	1	\$330,000
Additional PPE	1 and 2	\$85,000
Smart Scanners	1	\$61,000
Thermal Imaging Stands	1	\$45,000
Cross Country Education – only year one	1	\$173,000
Mobile Mini Care Rooms	1	\$22,000
Sanitization and Products for Buildings	1	\$70,000
ESSER III Required Plan, for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Manual	1	\$12,000
Total		\$798,000

This request will be included in Round 1 of the application process.

Priority 2: Learning Loss

To mitigate learning loss, specifically the gap in reading fluency and comprehension, Texans Can will hire and place a Literacy Coach on all 13 campuses. These literacy coaches will provide intense interventions for each core subject area for all students.

Literacy Coaches will provide instructional support for students identified as ESL, dyslexic, 504, or Tiered for intense interventions. Students identified for interventions will be supported through “push in” support in class, small groups in class, or one-to-one tutoring, depending on student need. Literacy Coaches will also provide intense reading interventions during the school day.

Literacy Coaches will be provided with professional development for dyslexia, sheltered instruction strategies, and the “Talk, Read, Talk, Write” reading process.

Both grade-level and off-level resources will be developed through the use of the Amplio/Esperanza Reading program, TEKS Resource System, Newsela, and Lead4ward resources. Data will be tracked using a district-developed instrument for progress monitoring.

Activity	Date Incurred	Amount
Literacy Coaches	2021 and 2022 School Year	\$2,925,000

Priority 3: Mental Health Services and Support

Mental health and social services marked the highest priority of items in answer to “What other items would you like Texans Can to prioritize?” Texans Can will attempt to address this need by implementing a campus-based Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model to ensure success for all students and provide assistance to students who present with academic or behavioral difficulties or who need additional psychosocial supports or opportunities to benefit from instruction.

MTSS is a continuum of school-wide support and addresses barriers to learning and contributes to the overall comprehensive school improvement efforts by examining the instructional delivery and using an integrated systems approach to teaching, learning, and behavioral supports. Moreover, the MTSS framework incorporates the three-tier model of intervention (public health triage models) that focuses on levels of treatment based on student need. At each successive tier, academic and/or behavioral interventions change, or become more targeted, as student needs are addressed.

Texans Can will hire 13 (one for each campus) Student Assistance Team Managers who all will have a masters of social work and be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a district supervisor.

Activity	Round	Amount
Personnel (one per 13 campuses)	1 and 2	\$3,116,250
District LSSP Supervisor	1 and 2	\$288,000
Supplies	1 and 2	\$45,000
Travel	1 and 2	\$30,000
Total		\$3,479,250

Priority 4: Plan for the Remainder of Funds

A plan for the remainder of the funds includes two components: (1) staff retention and (2) reimbursement for amounts previously expended.

Staff Retention

ESSER III Section 2001(e)(2)(R) states that ESSER funds may be used for “activities necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in LEAs (Local Education Agencies) and continuing to employ existing staff.” The Texas Education Agency has expressly indicated that retention stipends are an eligible use of funds if it can be demonstrated that the expense is reasonable and necessary. It can be agreed that campus personnel have had two difficult years and this is a way to retain staff and recognize the work that they have done.

Activity	Round	Amount
Retention Stipend for campus professional staff - \$5,000/employee	1	\$1,645,000
Retention Stipend for campus paraprofessional staff - \$2,500/employee	1	\$470,000
Total		\$2,115,000

The proposed payout for the stipend would be July 15, 2021 and included in the Round 1 application.

Reimbursement

As previously mentioned, ESSER III allows Texans Can to supplant or reimburse ourselves for amounts previously expended. The following areas and estimated amounts for reimbursement have been identified:

Activity	Date Incurred	Amount
Cross Country Education – Screeners	2021 School Year	\$660,000
Hot Spots – AT&T	2021 School Year	\$550,000
Facility improvements and PPE	Since March 13, 2020	\$500,000
OSHA 30 training (CCMR)	May and June 2021	\$150,000
IT Peripherals – not reimbursed elsewhere	Since March 13, 2020	\$1,528,500
Total		\$3,388,500

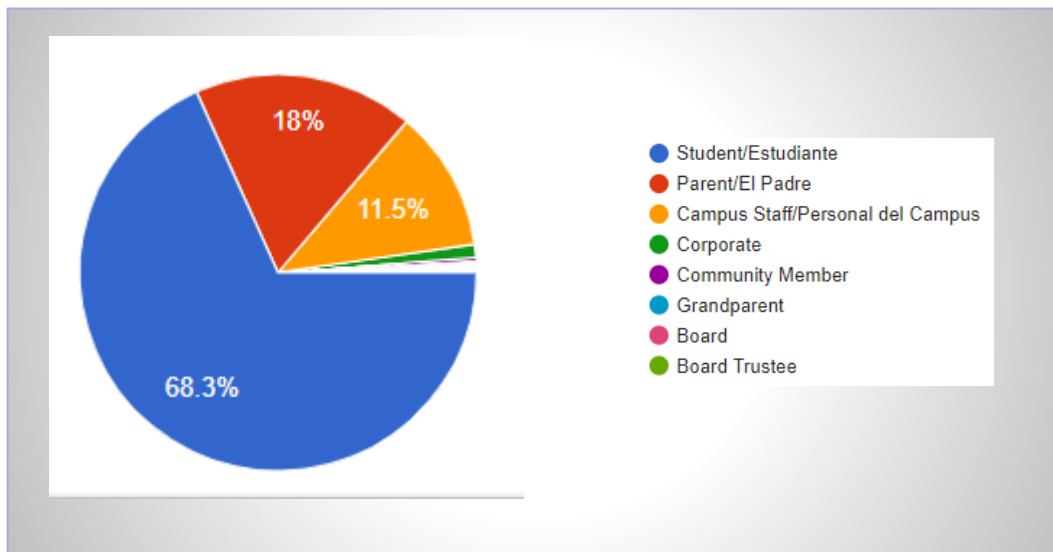
Appendix – American Rescue Plan Act ESSER III Survey

American Rescue Plan Act ESSER III Survey May 2021

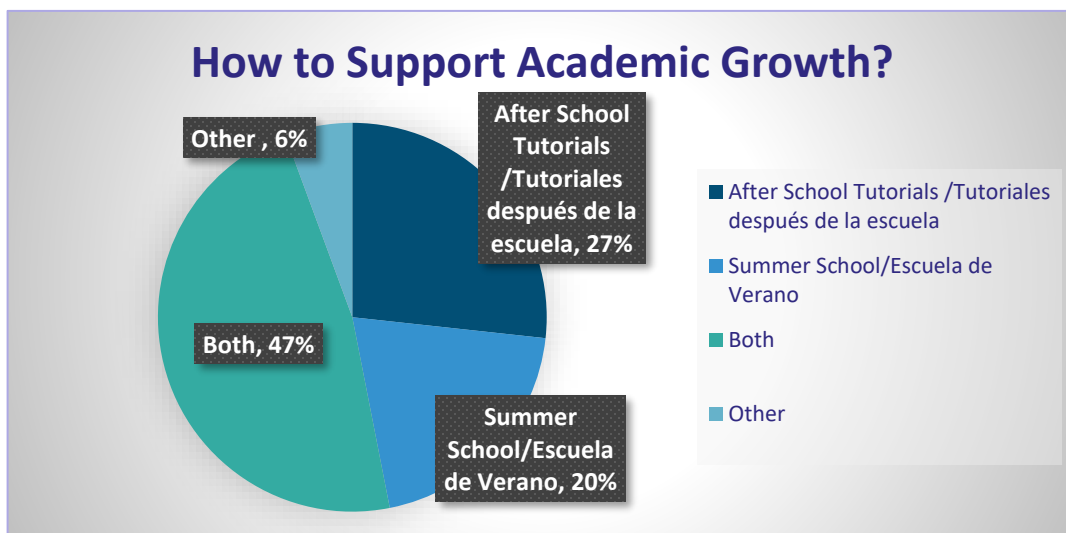
The bill dedicated \$13.2 billion for K-12 schools through the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund (ESSERF). Texans Can Academies was eligible to apply for ESSER III grant funds under the American Rescue Plan Act. Texans Can’s entitlement for ESSER III is projected to be \$12,705,759. Through a survey, the public was afforded an opportunity to provide feedback on how the district utilizes ESSER III grant funds. The survey was posted May 10, 2021 and closed May 14, 2021.

The total number of surveys completed was 2,583. Survey questions and responses are provided below, beginning with a breakdown of survey respondents by stakeholder role. Over two-thirds of respondents were students.

1. What is your primary stakeholder role?



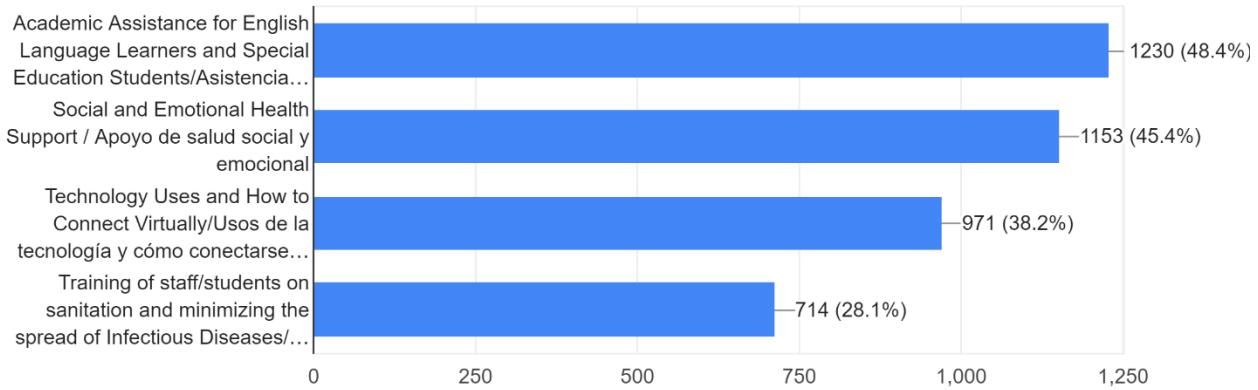
2. Which option, if offered, would support academic growth the most?



3. More assistance/support is needed with:

More assistance/support is needed with: / Más recursos académicos para la clase.

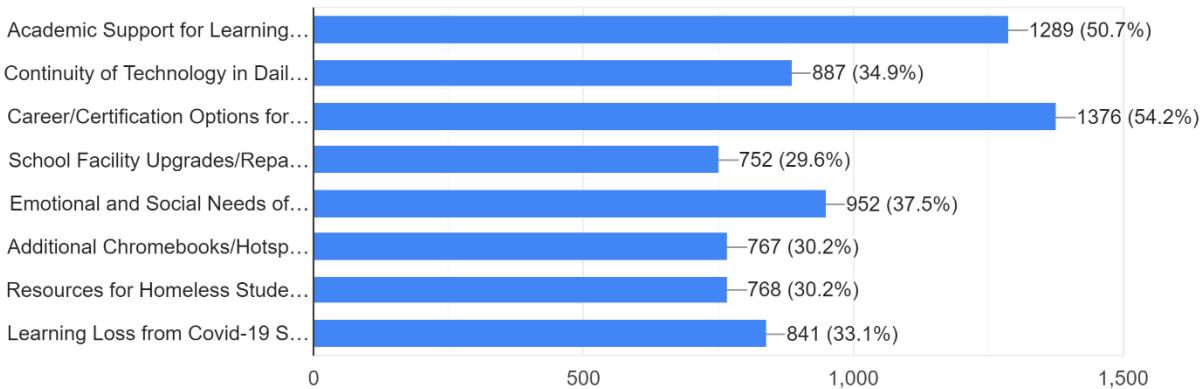
2,541 responses



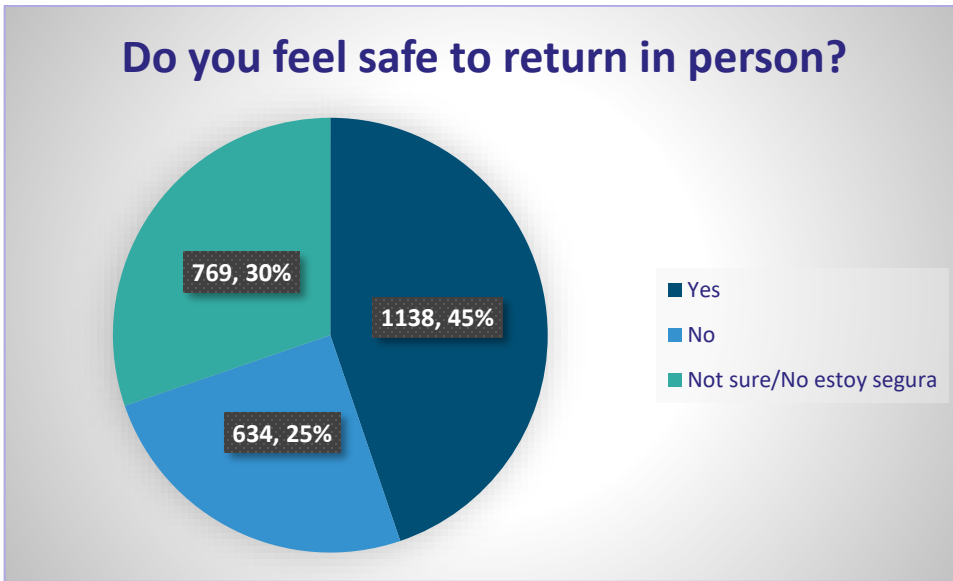
4. As we return to in-person learning, select the categories that the district planning team should consider.

As we return to in person learning, select the categories that the district planning team should consider./Al regresar al aprendizaje en persona, seleccionar las categorías que el equipo de planificación del distrito debe considerar.

2,541 responses



5. Because of COVID-19, do you feel safe coming back for in-person learning?



6. If you answered no above, please explain below:

669 (26% of total respondents) responses explained an answer of “no” to Question 5.

7. List other items you would like Texans Can to Prioritize:

Besides sports and better food, these are the items mentioned most:

1. Mental health
2. CCMR
3. Teacher compensation
4. Assistance for out-of-school issues like food and day care

Link to All Responses

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10g9AW_FDZ5KKMGLIa3TwDKikY2ewwCMGNr8zQc62GjM/edit?usp=sharing