

# Unatego Central Schools: Federal Stimulus Plan (2021-2024)

## Introduction

The 2021-22 enacted state budget includes language requiring local education agencies, such as school districts, that receive funding from the Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund allocated by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP-ESSER) to post on its website a plan of how these funds will be spent.

New York has been allocated nearly \$9 billion in ARP-ESSER funds, with a minimum of \$8.09 billion (90 percent) going to local education agencies, including public schools. Unatego Central has been allocated approximately \$3.2 million dollars as listed below:

Coronavirus Response Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) - \$727,114

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - \$2,560,742

Allocations need to be expensed within a 3 year period.

Districts are also required to prioritize spending on non-recurring expenses in the following areas:

- Safely returning students to in-person instruction.
- Maximizing in-person instruction time.
- Operating schools and meeting the needs of students.
- Purchasing educational technology.
- Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, including the impacts of interrupted instruction and learning loss and the impacts on low-income students, children with disabilities, English language learners, and students experiencing homelessness.
- Implementing evidence-based strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs.
- Offering evidence-based summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs.
- Facility improvements to support in person instruction.
- Supporting early childhood education.

In addition, districts must identify programs and services that will continue beyond the availability of these federal funds and how local funds will be used moving forward to minimize disruption to core academic and other school programs.

Before posting this plan, districts are required to seek public comment from parents, teachers and other stakeholders and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.

## Public Comment

Unatego Central Schools used a variety of means to elicit Public Comment on proposed spending plans. All plans were aligned with the Unatego Central School's Strategic Plan which was completed in the 2020-2021 school year with multiple stakeholders.

These areas of focus aligned with the requirements of the federal stimulus funds. Additional feedback was garnered from Board of Education Meetings, Leadership Team Meetings, Faculty Meetings, as well as a staff, parent, and community through online surveys.

An online survey was conducted, which invited staff, parents, students and community members to provide feedback as to how they would like to see the stimulus funds used. Information was obtained that helped the district focus the stimulus spending on areas of both academic support and social/emotional support.

Additional surveys are planned in the future to obtain feedback regarding additional supports that may be needed.

## Sustainability

Unatego Central School has developed a plan to sustain the financial outlays supported through the federal stimulus plan.

Staff considerations will be based on the feedback from stakeholders and an understanding of the enrollment projections as well as anticipated retirements within the next four to five years. The district will offset the anticipated costs of these positions in the future through attrition thus resulting in non-recurring expenditures.

The school district will also work with BOCES to ensure that needed programs, materials and supports that are not embedded into the school budget are sustained as needed through cost sharing options.

Listed below are the areas in which the federal funds will be targeted:

### A. Operating Schools and Meeting the Needs of Students:

- a. Purchase of portable air cleaner units and filters, to be used in every classroom, office and common area in the district.
- b. Purchase of PPE to be available for staff and students.
- c. Consider the rental or purchase of tents for each building to provide outdoor eating and instructional spaces.
- d. Purchase of portable tables to be used in the spare gym for lunches, in order to allow for 6 feet of social distance between students.

B. Addressing the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on all students, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students experiencing homelessness.

- a. Add two Academic Instructional Support (AIS) teachers at the Elementary Level and one AIS teacher at the Middle School level to provide a higher level of student support.
  - o This will allow for more direct teacher contact within the general education setting to support students with more individualized and specialized instruction in the areas of literacy and math.
- b. Add a social worker at the Middle School/High School to help provide social and mental health support to students.
- c. Add a School Resource Officer, to be shared between buildings, to help provide social and emotional support to the staff and students and enhance student and staff safety.
- d. Use trauma-informed strategies to address the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences on student learning

C. Offering evidence-based summer, afterschool and other extended learning and enrichment programs.

- a. Extended Learning Programs
  - o Provide academic support for grades K-12 after school. Transportation is provided to all eligible students.
- b. Enrichment Programs
  - o Summer Enrichment Program (K-12), including music, theater, athletic and STEAM programs
- c. Summer School Programming (K-5): Half day program targeting literacy and STEM development. Students identified based on benchmark assessments, attendance, and teacher recommendations.
- d. Summer School Programming (6-12): Targeted skill development for students at risk for academic failure. Students identified based on grades, attendance, benchmark assessments and teacher recommendations.

D. Implementing evidence-based strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs

- a. Support the current levels of Pupil Personnel Staffing.
- b. Instructional materials and professional development to support literacy.
- c. We will add a behavior specialist at the elementary school
- d. We will look to contract for professional development and coaching for our principals.

Conclusion: This plan will be reviewed and modified if needed every 6 months to ensure transparency and accurate reporting of how the monies are allocated.