

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

May 11, 2021

SUBJECT:

Consideration of Providing Employee Assistance Plan through ESSER II Funding

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) resulted from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) that was signed into law on December 27, 2020. The SC Department of Education is allocated \$940.4 million in ESSER II funds. From that, our District is projected to receive \$28,203,447. Funds must be spent by September 30, 2023. One allowable use is the provision of mental health services & supports.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

Our District has seen a significant increase in mental health needs among employees with limited resources available to assist causing an increase in extended medical leaves and turnover, as well as a decrease in productivity, efficiency, and engagement. A common option to provide resources and support to employees is an employee assistance plan.

An employee assistance plan (EAP) is a work-based intervention program designed to identify and assist employees in resolving personal problems that may be adversely affecting their performance at work, such as emotional, financial or marital problems; family issues; or substance or alcohol abuse. Marital and family problems, conflicts among co-workers and managers, depression, substance abuse, work-related stress, legal and financial issues, and child and elder care needs are just some of the concerns affecting employees' well-being. These distractions negatively impact productivity and instruction. EAPs are valuable resources that can help employees cope with issues affecting their ability to work at or close to their full potential.

The expected annual expense to provide employees with an EAP is \$60,000. There would be a slight reduction in funding estimates previously approved for after school and summer programs to fund the EAP, if approved. Alternate funding sources will be considered at the conclusion of ESSER II funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve utilization of ESSER II funds to provide an Employee Assistance Plan.

PREPARED BY:

M. O. Traxler III
Jennifer Hart