

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

September 14, 2021

SUBJECT:

Consideration of Proposed ESSER III Spending Revision #1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) was signed into law on March 11, 2021. The SC Department of Education (SCDE) was allocated approximately \$2.1 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds from ARP, of which \$63,386,401 is allocated to Aiken. Funds must be spent by September 30, 2024, within 15 allowable use categories. The School Board approved the District's original ESSER III spending plan at its August 10, 2021, meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The original ESSER III spending plan included \$250,000 for dual modality to cover costs of limited instances when it became necessary and unavoidable to require teachers to provide asynchronous, or simultaneous, instruction to students who were participating from the classroom setting and to students who were participating virtually. With the sharp rise in Covid numbers and student quarantines and in an effort to best meet students' instructional needs, the Administration recommends requiring dual modality instruction.

The Administration proposes paying classroom teachers a \$1,000 stipend per semester to compensate for additional duties. The estimated cost, with fringe, for 1,400 teachers is \$1,825,000 per semester. The Administration will assess the need to continue the dual modality requirement as the second semester nears; the determination would largely depend on whether Covid numbers have subsided. Teachers would be paid a lump sum in January for the first semester and, if necessary, in June for the second semester.

After considering components of the ESSER III spending plan, the Administration recommends utilizing funds originally proposed for the evening school program (\$1,450,000) and for the summer fine arts camps (\$250,000) to fund dual modality.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the dual modality requirement for classroom teachers, the \$1,000 per semester stipend, and the funding shift from the ESSER III evening school program and ESSER III summer fine arts camp to cover first semester costs. Upon Board approval, the revised plan will be submitted to the SCDE for consideration.

PREPARED BY:

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