



**JOLIET PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DISTRICT 86  
ESSER III - ARP  
Return to In-Person Learning 2021-22**

This document serves as the Joliet Public Schools District 86 plan for the return to full in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year including the proposed utilization of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. This plan focuses on four areas to ensure the safety of our students and staff, as well as addresses unfinished learning that may have occurred during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The four areas of focus are Academic and Digital Learning Supports, Social/Emotional Supports for Students and Staff, Health/Safety Resources, and Capital Improvements.

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

- Use academic testing to identify learning gaps
- Use research-based curricular programs
- Implement in-school reading interventions
- Purchase Educational Technology and Digital Learning Resources
- Implement in-school math interventions
- Implement activities and services related to summer learning
- Implement after-school academic support programs
- Address the needs of children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English Learners, marginalized groups, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth
- Provide family engagement opportunities for assisting parents and families on how they can effectively support students
- Provide additional resources and academic supports for early childhood (Pre-K to 2nd)
- Provide staff professional development opportunities
- Provide after-school clubs and activities for students
- Provide college/career readiness opportunities
- Provide community outreach to early learning organizations in the community

**Notes:** Our plan recognizes that no less than 20% of all ESSER III funds must be used to address unfinished learning. The cost of the interventions listed above comprise more than

20% of the funds granted. 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 community agencies to offer homework assistance and mentoring. We will continue to offer tutoring from professional educators. We have identified learning apps that will be made available to all students over the summer, as well as robust interventions during the school day to address any gaps that our students may be experiencing.

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

- Implement evidence-based SEL programs
- Provide social/emotional/behavioral support to students by way of counselors and social workers in each school
- Implement a social/emotional screening tools to identify which students need support
- Provide parent learning opportunities about trauma and ways to support students during a pandemic
- Provide professional development for teachers in the area of social/emotional learning and trauma

**Notes:** The District's plan to address the social/emotional needs of our students will be individualized to each building due to the varying SEL needs of students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The District will utilize a screening process to identify students who have deficiencies in their social/emotional competence. Students who are identified as needing additional support will be provided with a research-based SEL program, extracurricular activities, and other opportunities to strengthen those SEL skills.

**Health and Safety Resources:** The 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 level of protection, we will continue to require additional safety measures for the 2021-22 school year. As we return to full-time in-person instruction, we will:

- Utilize EPA/OSHA approved cleansers for frequently touched surfaces and materials
- Ensure mask wearing protocols when required or necessary
- Provide training and professional development on cleaning, disinfecting, sanitizing and reduction of virus transmission
- Purchase supplies and equipment to sanitize and clean facilities including electromagnetic sprayers
- Plan for long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students/families
- Retrofit drinking fountains with bottle filler stations

**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 by ensuring use of the highest-rated minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) air filters in all spaces. This will be accomplished by upgrading HVAC system filters (where applicable), placing appropriately-sized portable air filters in spaces, and by replacing several steam boilers
- Purchase classroom technology resources to enhance teaching and learning
- Enhance physical, digital, and online security

**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 for all students. We also plan on making the most of our large spaces (i.e. gyms and cafeterias) to allow for social distancing if necessary.