IMBODEN AREA CHARTER SCHOOL

LEA 3840700

ESSER Funding Utilization Plan

September 16, 2022 Revision to Meet the Recommendations of Arkansas Legislative Council

**Introduction**

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, Imboden Area Charter School has been allocated relief funding from DESE in three separate packages. The first package finalized in November 2020 awarded the school an allocation of $19,049.26. Package two was published January 2021 and saw the school receive an additional $89,697.02 allocation. Then in March of 2021, DESE released another funding notice allocating an additional $201,668.54 to IACS in Covid Relief funds. The ARP package that was released in March of 2021 includes a minimum 20% set aside to address learning losses. Therefore, IACS is required to set aside a minimum of $40,561.37 for addressing learning loss. In May of 2022, DESE released funding notifications including an additional $541.37 in ESSER II funding, and an additional $1138.33 in ARP ESSER funds.

**Timeline of Obligation**

Current information provides liquidation dates for each allocation. The original $19,049.26 package must be liquidated by September 30, 2022. The second allocation of $89,697.02 must be obligated prior to September 30, 2023, and the third allocation of $201,668.54 must be obligated prior to September 30, 2024.

**Plans for Utilizing Funds Listed in Original Plan**

The Imboden Area Charter School will utilize ESSER funds in the following ways:

* Purchase of additional laptop computers to support a potentially virtual learning environment.
* Hire a teacher’s aide to provide students with additional support to limit learning loss.
* Renew subscription to Renaissance Learning’s STAR and Accelerated Reading programs.
* Supplement contract services with school janitors to provide additional cleaning and disinfecting.
* Purchase of PPE to limit the spread of Covid.
* Renew agreement with Lincoln Learning to provide digital content to virtual students.
* Purchase of supplemental mathematics learning materials.
* Purchase of supplemental RISE approved literacy materials.
* IACS will continue to provide underperforming students with after school tutoring in literacy and mathematics. This program has been previously funded by ESA, but could be funded by ESSER to address learning loss.
* Assist with continuity of operations or budgetary shortfalls resulting from the pandemic.

**Additional Plans for Utilization of Funds as of June 2022**

* IACS has worked closely with Tally Harp from DESE, Lana Jean and Chrissy Sain from the NEA COOP to align IACS’ literacy program with Science of Reading Guidelines. IACS has made the decision to purchase a new core reading program, Content Knowledge Language Arts, for all grade levels Kindergarten through 8th. The cost of this endeavor is estimated at $32,000.00.
* Along with the adoption of a new core literacy program, IACS again has worked with the aforementioned ladies to bolster IACS’ Dyslexia Intervention program. IACS has decided to invest in the Take Flight program to provide to students scoring well below grade level in literacy. The expected cost of this program is around $10,000.00
* IACS is strongly considering hiring a second teacher’s aide utilizing ESSER funds to provide additional support to students and teachers.
* IACS will be investigating the possibility of applying ESSER funds to the purchase of an additional school bus.

In response to Arkansas Legislative Council’s recommendations to pay staff recruitment and retention bonuses, Imboden Area Charter School District, LEA 3840, will pay the following bonuses to employees out of ARP ESSER funds. Bonuses were calculated based on the recommended formulas presented in Commissioner’s Memo COM-23-008. The below list details the bonuses that will be paid on or before October 15, 2022.

Matthew Wells- Full- time certified administrator, and .5 FTE special education teacher. $5000.00 bonus.

Elizabeth Scales- Full- time certified teacher, and part- time administrator. $5000.00 bonus.

Natalie Kingery- Full- time certified teacher. $5000.00 bonus.

Megan Carey- Full- time certified teacher. $5000.00 bonus.

Katrine Thomas- Full- time certified teacher. $5000.00 bonus.

Paula Wagner- .2 FTE certified school counselor. $2500.00 bonus.

Tosha Hardin- Full- time classified ESA Tutor. $2500.00 bonus.

Eunice Alderson- .5 FTE classified ESA Teacher’s Aide, and .5 FTE classified transportation monitor. $2500.00 bonus.

Lisa Lewallen- Full- time classified business manager/bookkeeper. $2500.00 bonus.

Sandy Jones- .2 FTE certified Nurse. $2500.00 bonus.

Anne Vance- Full- time classified Custodian. $2500.00 bonus.

Bob Matthews- .6 FTE classified Bus Driver. $2500.00 bonus.

Additionally, the Imboden Area Charter School’s administration and board of director’s would like to present the following as justification for the bonuses paid. Ending the school year 2021-22 IACS had one full time teacher, one .5 FTE special education teacher, one .2 FTE school counselor, and one .2 FTE school nurse all retire. Advertisements were placed in the Jonesboro Sun, Pocahontas Star Herald, and Times Dispatch newspapers in late May. By late June, IACS had received only four applications, none of which had proper certification for the positions applied for. At this point, IACS administration posted the positions on Facebook, and the Indeed website. By late July, only three additional applications had been received, none of which had full and proper certification for the positions applied for. Finally in early August, with no other reasonable solutions available, IACS was able to fill the Nurse’s position with a fully certified candidate, and both the full- time classroom teacher position and the .2 FTE school counselor’s position were filled by candidates lacking full certification and requiring ALPs. As of today September 16, 2022, IACS has not been able to fill the .5 FTE special education teacher’s position. Currently, Matthew Wells, the school’s only full- time certified administrator, has taken on the additional duty of teaching special education along with all the paperwork and conferences of said position. It is the feeling of IACS administration that while the above-mentioned bonuses are a pleasant sign of appreciation to staff currently employed and present some motivation for continued employment, the issue still remains that the pool of quality candidates available to fill positions is extremely shallow. With the significant cost of college tuition required to obtain proper credentials, the ever-growing list of demands put on teachers to retain certification, and the considerable time teachers must commit to their job beyond what is contracted, a beginning teacher’s salary of $36,000.00 is simply not attractive to many.