



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF Multiple Pathways to Graduation

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Date: 2/6/24

To: PPS School Board

From: Korinna Wolfe, Senior Director of Schools, Multiple Pathways to Graduation
Erica Stavis, Program Administrator, Contracted Alternative Schools

Subject: Recommendation to approve ESSER Capital Improvements exceeding \$25,000

BACKGROUND

PPS currently contracts with 9 Contracted Alternative Schools (CBO's). Each of these schools provide unique and innovative educational options for PPS students requiring tailored and individualized support. These organizations are seen as strategic partners with PPS and support our district's dropout prevention and educational advancement priorities and goals.

This memo is designed to inform and request approval from the PPS Board for three capital improvement projects from two of our CBO schools. **Please note, this is not a request for new funds.** These ESSER III funds have already been approved and individual ESSER allotments have been awarded to each of the Contracted Alternative Schools as part of the regular budget process. CBO school leaders may determine how to best use these funds, based on feedback from their Board of Directors and other key community stakeholders, as long as it aligns with the allowable uses for this grant and our district's goals. Per ODE guidelines, when schools proceed in requesting ESSER funding for capital improvements that exceed \$25,000, School Board approval is required.

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund). It provides funding for state and local educational agencies to spend on allowable activities to respond to COVID-19. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III (ESSER III or ARP ESSER) The American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (ARP Act or ARPA) provides an additional \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III (ESSER III or ARP ESSER).

All capital expenditures using ESSER II or ESSER III funds must first be approved by ODE to be considered an eligible use of the grant funds. For the ESSER Grants, "capital expenditure" is defined as follows:

A construction project or individual non-consumable item that:

- 1) Has a useful life of more than one year; and
- 2) Costs greater than \$5,000

Additionally on 10/25/2021, ODE published a "ESSER Capital Expenditures and Reimbursement Update" which included the new regulation that "all capital expenditures over \$25,000 be presented to your district's school board for their approval".

Each of the capital projects listed below have been deemed eligible from the PPS Grant Accounting office and a required form has already been submitted by ODE (please see chart below). ODE states that “Capital expenditure approvals may be submitted prior to obtaining school board approval”. We are now requesting Board approval for projects that exceed the \$25,000 threshold. Each of these requests align with allowable uses of ESSER III funds as [indicated on Oregon.gov](#), and confirmed with ODE approval. Once approved by ODE, each project will be listed on ODE’s [“ESSER II and ESSER III Capital Expenditures by District & ESD”](#)

<i>CBO School Name</i>	<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Project Estimate</i>	<i>Project Description</i>
Helensview School	Wireless Radio Communication devices (ODE Project Tag 2180-15)	\$ 25,179.46	Radio devices for keeping students safe and promoting good communication across various locations across the school facility. Allowable Use “Purchasing educational technology, which could include hardware, software, and connectivity, for students served by the LEA that aids in regular, substantive educational interaction between students and educators, including low-income students and students with disabilities. This could also include assistive technology or adaptive equipment. ARP Act Section 2001(e)(2)(K).”
Helensview School	Oregon Valley Greenhouse (ODE Project Tag 2180-14)	\$ 38,294.00	This will address the unique needs of low-income children by providing sustained opportunity for hands-on learning regarding food cycles, plant life cycles, sustainable agriculture practices, and related professional fields. These types of hands-on programming are proven to promote high engagement for at-risk students enrolled in an alternative school, needing to tie high school completion to post graduate plans. Students enrolled at Helensview school were disproportionately impacted by the Covid Pandemic and the school is over 70% racially historically underserved.
Rosemary Anderson High School	RAHS North Campus Improvement (ODE Project Tag 2180-12)	\$372,203.10	Increasing/expanding space to be able to offer differentiated services to students. This safe, welcoming learning environment will support academic growth of students and provide the opportunity to increase family/community engagement centered on promoting a healthy school climate and culture.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

- PPS has developed a fund contract with each of our CBO schools which codifies various requirements of each grant available. This contract is updated annually to ensure compliance with updated standards.
- Each school has a fund approval planner between CBO school executive leadership and PPS Multiple Pathways Leadership. This document is used to ensure the appropriate use of funds, based on the various projects they wish to undertake. Additionally, the appropriate approvals are detailed on each school's fund planner.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funding identified for the requested capital improvements at Contracted Alternative Schools is designated ESSER III funding from 2021. This funding was approved in the overall ESSER allocations plan and as a part of the PPS District Budget process. There is no new funding requested. Funding identified for this project is required to be spent by September 30, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CBO schools have engaged with their communities, leadership teams and individual organization's Board of Directors prior to submitting their capital improvement requests to the District.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION

Following Board approval of these expenditures capital improvements will take place before ESSER III funds expiration date of 9/30/2024.

Evaluation of implementation will take place first by the CBO schools and vendors selected. Additional evaluation will be conducted during school site visits at CBO schools by Multiple Pathways to Graduation leaders.

BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS

CBO school leadership has discretion in how they plan to use ESSER III Funds, as long as it aligns with allowable uses for each grant category and follows all state and federal grant guidelines.

Results of a yes vote: CBO schools will engage in projects as previously submitted and approved by ODE. These improvements will ensure higher levels of physical and environmental safety for PPS students.

Result of a no vote: CBO schools would not be able to proceed with much needed capital improvements as outlined and approved within the ESSER allowable uses.

CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS

Projects seeking approval, align with at least two specific board goals as outlined in ["Portland Public Schools Goals for Our Students 2022-2027"](#) CBO schools operations and programming are all in direct alignment with goals for High School Graduation & Post-secondary Readiness.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that each of the Capital projects outlined above, exceeding \$25,000, be approved by the Board since they meet the ESSER eligibility criteria and clearly align with district goals and priorities.