



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF Multiple Pathways to Graduation

501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227
Telephone: (503) 916-5437

Date: 7/25/2022

To: School Board

From: Korinna Wolfe, Area Senior Director, 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 4 distinct capital improvement projects/purchases from 2 of our CBO schools. **Please note, this is not a request for new funds.** These ESSER funds have already been approved and individual ESSER allotments have been awarded to each of the Contracted Alternative Schools as part of the 2021-22 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 each grant. Per ODE guidelines, when schools proceed in requesting ESSER funding for capital improvements, School Board approval is now 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 a new regulation that “all capital expenditures over \$25,000 be presented to your district's school board for their approval”.

Two CBO schools, Mt. Scott Learning Center & Helensview School, have Capital Projects that have already been approved 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 II & ESSER III funds as [indicated on Oregon.gov](#), and confirmed with ODE approval.

Each of these approvals is listed on ODE’s [“ESSER II and ESSER III Capital Expenditures by District & ESD”](#)

The following is a list of projects which exceed \$25,000, all of which have already been approved by ODE.

\$65,000	<i>Approved by ODE</i>
Project tag: 2180-03 Helensview School - Contract # IGA 90891 Sound Booth Construction	
Separation for students engaging in broadcasting and promoting CTE programming. Individual spaces are necessary for preventing Covid transmission. This CTE programming has been the most popular and successful of CTE programs at Helensview.	

\$253,374.00	<i>Approved by ODE</i>
Project tag: 2180-04 Mt Scott Learning Center - Contract # PS 90294 HVAC System	
New HVAC system for the entire building. The existing system is not compatible with the new state-wide mandated 'fresh-air & filtration, better than MERV 13 rating.' Will bring heating & cooling to all classrooms and offices. Oil heat will be decommissioned”	

\$50,000	<i>Approved by ODE</i>
Project tag: 2180-05 Mt Scott Learning Center - Contract # PS 90294 Roof Repair	
Repair to the roof preparatory to installing the new HVAC System, which is needed to bring the school up to the new state-wide mandated 'fresh-air & filtration, better than MERV 13 rating.'	

\$28,902.43	<i>Approved by ODE</i>
Project tag: 2180-09 Helensview School	

Stage & Lights Upgrade

Stage and Lights safety Upgrade for Helensview Campus. Current facility is unusable and unsafe. Theater and drama are proven healers for trauma, anxiety and grief. After the pandemic, many of our students - which are already trauma impacted - were reluctant to come back to school due to fears caused by the pandemic. Being able to offer drama for students will offer them a way to process grief/anxiety and work to heal through storytelling, catharsis and community building.

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 executive leadership and PPS 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 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.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Each of the CBO schools has engaged with their 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 each funds expiration date:

- ESSER II- 9/30/2023
- ESSER III- 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 II & 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 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 two specific board goals as outlined in [“Portland Public Schools Goals for Our Students 2022-2027”](#) Mt Scott Learning Center and Helensview School 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.

As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.

_____ *(Initials)*