



To: American Rescue Plan Team (ESSER)

From: Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Date: June 2nd, 2021

During the COVID Closure (PAUSE) families of students with disabilities have experienced tremendous hardship and adversity. Our work this year with families has identified various areas that were already difficult to navigate became additional barriers in accessing their education. SEPAC has outlined our recommendations for the ARF / ESSER funds to help create a conversation with Buffalo Public Schools so that we can partner together for the success of students with disabilities.

Our Priorities:

- 1) Increasing inclusion in all areas of Buffalo Public Schools programming for students with disabilities.
- 2) Using Site Based management team resource data to assess the needs of each building to ensure that we can build capacity to address the needs of the students with disabilities. Using ESSER funds to bridge the gap increasing support.
- 3) Building on the successes from the established Culturally & Linguistic Responsive Initiatives to increase disability awareness throughout Buffalo Public Schools.

Our recommendations:

- 1) Funding allotment for building based Behavior Specialists in each school that does not already have one. Behavior specialists can support the specialized training of Student Support Teams, Administration, building based aides, and long term substitutes. Buildings with these supports already in place have increased multidisciplinary approaches to student behavior and work collaboratively to increase family & student engagement, and show enhanced academic success. Modifications to the Restorative Practices in each building can be made to ensure engagement with SWD.
- 2) Assessing the current Extended Learning Day, find ways in which we can build capacity to serve students with disabilities, so that they can have access to extra support as is provided to their general education peers. ARF / ESSER funds can be utilized to increase partnerships with colleges, social service, and community agencies.
- 3) SEPAC supports the enhancement of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports in order to create Individualized Student Success plans for students determined to need Response to Intervention supports for Academics & Behavior. An emphasis should be placed in Early Childhood grade levels to support mastery of key identifiers for student learning success. The enactment of such

plans will address students who present with unique learning styles that may not meet traditional requirements of a student with a disability.

ARF / ESSER funds can be utilized to help plan, and remediate the academic skills that students have regressed in. Funds can be utilized to increase budgets to hire more teachers to implement AIS.

Development of a Curriculum Committee that can specifically address above example of student needs.

- For example: **Math** - *with over a year on remote, students are going to be behind in math skills, use of the graphing calculator, etc. Requests for funding for AIS in math, possible double blocks or block and a half of math. ELA* - *they can catch up on skills over the four years, but with math, they move from algebra to geometry, which do not necessarily build upon each other. This applies to cohort 2019 and cohort 2020, both will have received their algebra regents as a COVID exemption. We need to make sure that they know the content and master the skills to be successful in college.*

- 4) Using the successes experienced by the CLRI team to increase awareness of disabilities for all building level stakeholders such as Principals, Assistants, Teachers, and Aides. *Note: Research shows that Historically individuals with disabilities have experienced discrimination and exclusion.*
 - Training for teachers on compassionate communication and how to deal with students with special needs and behavioral challenges.
- 5) Assistive Technology –
 - Assess school based use of assistive technology already available to students with disabilities.
 - Use data to find areas where we can enhance usage.
 - Use ARF / ESSER to purchase the most current technology equipment available to expand the reach for student success.
- 6) SEPAC is requesting that all classrooms have a sensory kit / toolbox purchased so that every teacher whether general education or special education status can utilize the tools to support the needs of their students (i.e. Behavioral, Socio-Emotional, and Mental health).
- 7) SEPAC is requesting that all classrooms have a medical sensory kit / toolbox purchased so that every teacher whether general education or special education status can utilize the tools to support the Medical & Physical needs of their students.
 - Desk/rooms that will support student with medical and physical differences.
- 8) SEPAC is requesting that Site Based Management Teams review their specific building needs for professional support staff (such as Speech, Occupational, Physical therapists, Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologist, Behavior Specialist, Aides, Peer Support). Using ARF/ ESSER funds to fill in the gaps.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on these recommendations.

With Gratitude SEPAC