



**American Rescue Plan ESSER  
Link Community Charter School Use of Funds Plan**

**Fall 2021**

**Identified Needs:**

1. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facility

Cleaning and sanitizing supplies are necessary to properly care for the facility used by students and staff in order to maintain a safe physical environment and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Cleaning and sanitizing take on an even greater importance considering the following school related issues:

- high traffic usage
- higher incidence of illness coupled with underdeveloped healthy habits among younger children
- lower vaccination rates in elementary school students

2. Purchasing educational technology for students

Technology in the form of Chromebooks and mobile hotspots are necessary for remote learning as students must be ready to pivot quickly due to required isolation or quarantine situations and must have the tools necessary to engage in virtual learning. These tools facilitate continued learning by delivering access to Google Classroom and other platforms and providing reliable access to the internet. More than 80% of LCCS's population is low-income and therefore many do not have the resources to provide these tools independent of the school. Low-income families must prioritize use of very limited resources and stable internet is often not secured. The stability of the internet connection is of particular concern as it interferes with usage of Zoom, used for synchronous virtual instruction, and it limits multiple students in one household from gaining access. Approximately 100 LCCS families have reported unstable internet or lack of internet access. School-issued devices are needed.

3. Securing mental health services for students

Supportive counseling is necessary to address growing anxiety about school, increased incidents of conflict and HIB, gaps in social and academic skills. The pandemic has left children and teens anxious and fearful, isolated, and stressed. A combination of the physical impact of the virus, the closure of schools, and the onslaught of media attention has impacted children and teens. As they re-enter schools, they will need mental health supports to heal, make sense of the last 15 months, and find ways to re-acclimate and move forward.

4. Hiring additional teaching staff and paraprofessionals to address learning loss/learning acceleration

Additional teachers and paraprofessionals are needed to deliver individualized and small group instruction that will address learning loss and support learning acceleration, evidenced in the Start Strong test data from both Fall 2021 and Fall 2020.

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Start Strong ELA % Needing Strong Support</b>	<b>Start Strong Math % Needing Strong Support</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	44	89
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	37	77
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	27	58
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	26	55

A year of remote learning has impacted student learning and led to significant need for support as students work with the standards in their current grade level.

5. Addressing Learning Loss/Learning Acceleration

Link needs high quality assessment tools, such as NWEA and Literably; curriculum updates; after-school programming; summer learning; and instructional coaching to support strong instruction and learning.

6. Repair and improve facility to reduce the risk of virus transmission

Windows need to be repaired to improve ventilation and bathroom fixtures need to be improved to create a contactless environment that reduces the risk of virus transmission. Antiquated fixtures and heavy usage combine for higher incidents of transmission. Broken and aging windows cannot be opened properly to allow for good air flow.

**Plan for Use of Funds:**

1. Approximately 40% of the funds will be used to prevent and mitigate virus transmission.

Specifically, funds will be used to minimize the spread of COVID-19 through:

- the purchase of PPE (masks, screens/shielding, and hand sanitizer) for use throughout the school building
- the repair and improvement of fixtures (lights, toilets, sinks, towel dispensers, etc.) to provide contactless usage
- the repair of windows (springs, latches, screens, etc.) throughout the building to provide for increased ventilation

2. Funds will be used to support student learning loss and learning acceleration through:

- the implementation of a standards-aligned, student-centered afterschool program with Catapult Learning;
  - the addition of paraprofessionals and teachers to provide a more individualized approach to support and the creation of small group sessions;
  - updates to the curriculum to ensure appropriate scaffolding for standards-aligned instruction;
  - using high quality, research-based, and standards-aligned assessment tools (such as NWEA, IXL, and Literably) to provide informative data that teachers can use to plan for effective instruction;
  - a four-week, full day summer learning program that actively engages students in learning through a combination of in-classroom instruction, independent work, and field trips; and
  - the purchase of student Chromebooks and mobile hotspots as needed to prevent interruptions to learning during periods of necessary isolation and/or quarantines.
3. Funds will be used to secure counseling services for students as they navigate the return to in-person learning and all the areas of impact, including social interactions, habits and traits needed for learning, feelings of anxiety, fear, and stress, and displacement. As some of the feelings are manifesting in behaviors that can be disruptive to learning, funds will also be used to secure professional development for teachers and staff so they can best support classroom management and learning. Funds will also be used to ensure the continuity of food services for students both with pick up at the school and with home delivery when necessary.

Consultation with various stakeholders is ongoing and includes board members and parents, as well as local community partners with relevant expertise. Funds ensure continuity of services, testing, and compliance for special needs students through the use of technology, staffing and additional resources.