

# **HCA's ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plan**

2021/2022

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Harpowell Coastal Academy (HCA) is an intentionally small learning community with a foundation in project-based, place-based and inquiry-based learning. We are committed to safe, healthy and accessible in-person schooling for the 2021/2022 school year and are accomplishing that by following CDC and MDOE guidelines and recommendations, and by utilizing funding from the various Federal Covid-19 relief funds in an effective and equitable manner.

The following is HCA's *Use of Funds Plan*, as required in the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSERF).

- 1) Funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that follow CDC guidance. We will continue to support and maintain our health/safety protocols with hand sanitizing, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces, a universal masking policy, and pooled testing. We also are supporting and maintaining our technology infrastructure to support students who need to be remote due to medical concerns (substantiated with a doctor's note) and with maintaining our ability to go fully remote if need be.

We are also following CDC guidance by separating our middle school high school cohorts by continuing with the split routes we implemented last year. This both reduces the number of students on any given bus and keeps our two campuses separated to mitigate risk and effects of exposure.

Finally, our classroom size reduction efforts are oriented towards supporting academic growth and social/emotional/mental health, which is an important component in ensuring the overall health and safety of our school community.

- 2) Funds will be utilized to address learning loss in the following ways:

Classroom size reduction increases academic support by increasing the amount of attention and personalization each student receives during class. Also, it deepens the social/emotional connections between students and staff that are a cornerstone of intentionally small learning communities like HCA. Both the academic and social/emotional benefits are a key need at this point of the pandemic and are most directly served by us investing heavily in this area.

- 3) Remaining funds will be used in the following ways:

We are continuing to reduce occupancy on our buses with the split-routes we implemented in the 2020/2021 school year. This was effective at increasing social distancing capacity on our bus runs. It was also a key way that we isolated our high

school (Division  $\frac{2}{3}$ ) student cohort from our middle school (Division 1) student cohort. In the past, both campuses had been on a single run, with the high school students first being dropped off at our Brunswick campus and middle school students then being dropped off at our Harpswell campus, with the reverse in the afternoon. This additional load has put a strain on our transportation capacity and budget.

Over the past 18 months, HCA has put into place both health/safety and technology infrastructures that require maintenance, updating, and continued organizational capacity.

- 4) HCA will ensure that these interventions address learning loss and respond to the social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students in several ways. The first is teacher training. We will continue supporting our teachers with how they structure and facilitate their advisory periods (called “crew” at HCA). This is a period that has both social/emotional and academic check-in’s built in and also actively develops community among a small group of students. We have a crew walk-through tool that we will use to track and measure how much and how well the components of crew are being implemented. Crew is an existing practice at HCA that is benefitting from the smaller class sizes and ongoing training and support.

For learning loss, we will use the NWEA to track academic growth and performance and measure the impact of smaller class sizes. This is nationally normed and provides targets for both grade level achievement and growth as well as growth targets that are broken down into content area strands. Also, we have our local assessment system, which is standards-based and tracks student achievement over time. Data can be broken down into subgroups, so we can assess the impact we are having on our students body as a whole, on individual students, and on groups such as low SES or special education students.

For social/emotional wellbeing and mental health, we use an annual survey called the Panorama Survey. This provided us with annual and longitudinal data for us to judge the effectiveness of our overall school programming on our school climate and culture. We set annual goals for this and track our progress with meeting those goals. This year, our goal is: “As a community, we explore our identities, foster safety, and cultivate belonging by engaging in restorative justice and crew practices.” The survey results can be broken down into subgroups, so we can track impact on different groups of students.