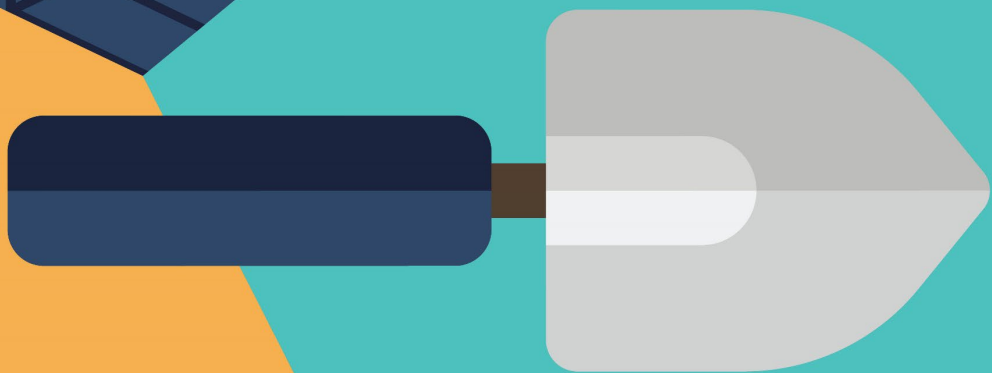# READY, SET RELIEF

*Plan Well, Spend Wisely*

**MINNESOTA BREAKOUT SESSION**

# Minnesota Presenters

**Dave Bergeron**

ICS Principal
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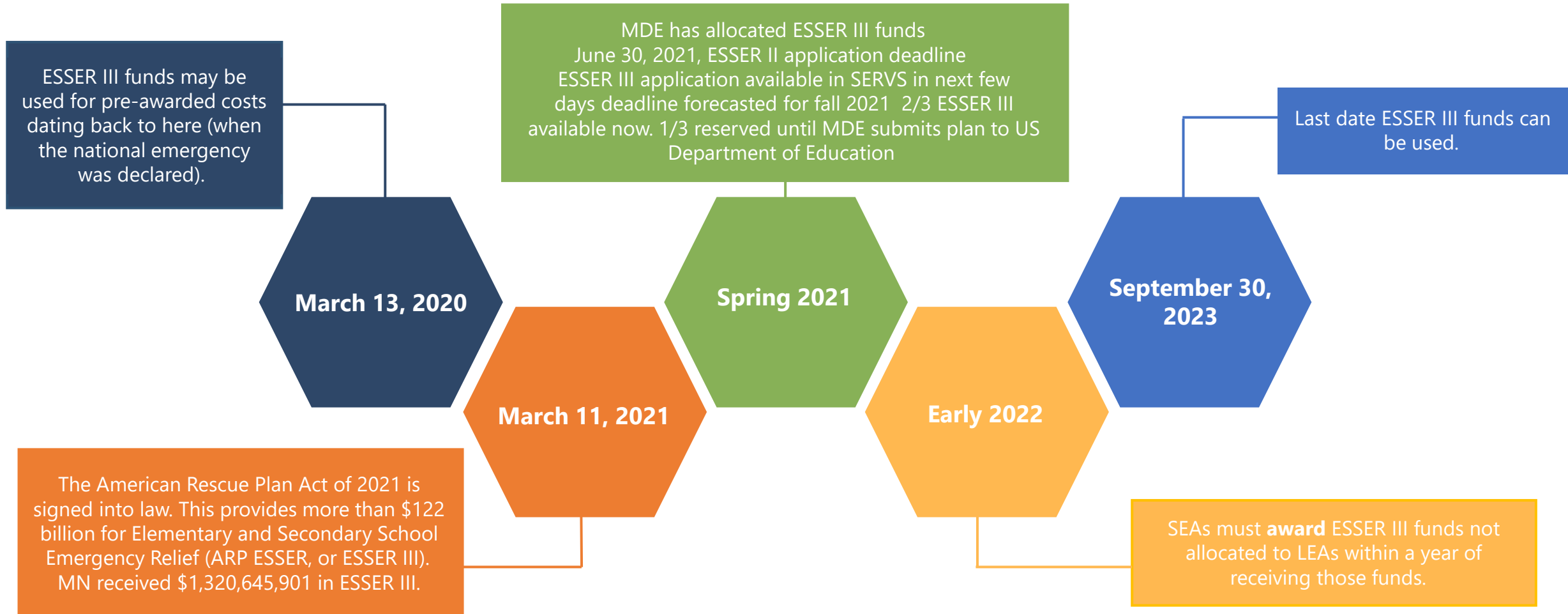ICS Principal
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- **2021 Infrastructure Report Card**
  - **53%** of schools need to upgrade ventilation
  - **33%** have capacity issues
  - National funding gap **$38 billion/per year**

- **Current state gap in MN: $818 million**

2021 Infrastructure Report Card

- **53%** of schools need to upgrade ventilation

- **33%** have capacity issues

- National funding gap **$38 billion/per year**

D+

# MN ESSER III FUNDING INFORMATION DATES AND DEADLINES

ESSER III funds may be used for pre-awarded costs dating back to here (when the national emergency was declared).

MDE has allocated ESSER III funds
June 30, 2021, ESSER II application deadline
ESSER III application available in SERVS in next few days deadline forecasted for fall 2021  2/3 ESSER III available now. 1/3 reserved until MDE submits plan to US Department of Education

Last date ESSER III funds can be used.

**March 13, 2020**

**March 11, 2021**

**Spring 2021**

**Early 2022**

**September 30, 2023**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 is signed into law. This provides more than $122 billion for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER, or ESSER III). MN received $1,320,645,901 in ESSER III.

SEAs must **award** ESSER III funds not allocated to LEAs within a year of receiving those funds.

*Note: The funds are available for obligation by SEAs and LEAs through September 30, 2023.*
*The Tydings Amendment will furthermore give states and districts an additional year. March 13, 2020- September 30, 2024.*

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# MN ESSER III Funding Information

*Receiving Funding Process*

- **20% of each ESSER III 90% award** must be spent on activities that address "learning loss" due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The ESSER III 90% awards will be loaded into SERVS Financial as two separate grant opportunities.

  - **80% of the total** will be available under *finance code 160* to be used for a wide variety of allowable activities in response to COVID-19.

  - **20% of the total** will be available under *finance code 161* to be used only for activities that support students' learning recovery following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# MN ESSER III Funding Information

*Receiving Funding Process (Continued)*

- ESSER III funds require a school to publish an **In-Person Instruction Plan** on their district website **within 30 days of receiving funds**. The district must seek public comment prior to publishing the plan.

- **Funds are drawn through reimbursement.** This means schools must expend actual dollars (not just have contracted dollars) prior to receiving funds.  Fund draw deadlines will be quarterly starting FY22 but in the case of construction, schools will want to draw monthly to manage cashflow.

# Construction and IAQ Improvements

*Federal Requirements for Construction & IAQ Improvements (Pre-Approval)*

- Per federal rules, capital expenditures for construction, building remodeling and large equipment purchases with a **unit price of $5,000**, require prior approval from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

  - Approval is given for capital expenses that **directly address the impact of COVID-19 on schools.**

- SEAs have no authority to approve any construction or equipment purchases after the fact.

- **DON'T FORGET:** It is important to put time into rationale into how the project fits criteria of funding.

  - Federal auditors may be looking at this to assure your expenses meet the intent of the law.

  - May delay funds if MDE requests additional information to evaluate and make an approval.

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# Construction and IAQ Improvements

*Steps for Getting Approval from SEAs for Construction & IAQ Projects*

- **Step 1:** Explain the purpose of the project.

- **Step 2:** Explain how the completed construction or remodeling is necessary and a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

- **Step 3:** Describe where the remodeling or construction is to occur. If remodeling, include the specific building or space to be remodeled.

- **Step 4:** State whether the area is owned by the local educational agency (LEA) or if it is leased space.

- **Step 5:** Estimated start and finish date.

- **Step 6:** Name of the construction company.

- **Step 7:** Itemized estimate from the construction company.

- **Step 8:** Estimated the total cost of the project.

- **Step 9:** Submit the request to Minnesota Department of Education.

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# Strategic Approach

**Step 1 - Identify team and resources to outline district priorities (cross-sectional teams)**

**Step 2 – Perform needs assessment (all areas of competing applications for funds)**

- o 'Dust off' old facilities reports or create one if it does not exist

- o Review and reprioritize facility needs in light of COVID era

- o Identify deferred maintenance that could be funded by ESSER Funds (All IAQ and related work)

- o Ability to control/address IAQ may make the difference in keeping students in school while addressing Parent/Faculty/Staff safety concerns or sending kids back to cyber learning platforms.

**Step 3 – Prioritize needs using a decision matrix**

- o The more you can use a data driven approach to support decisions the better

- o Use of these funds will be scrutinized by internal and external stakeholders. It is wise to have justifications prepared before the questions/accusations are leveled

**Step 1**
Identify Team and Resources
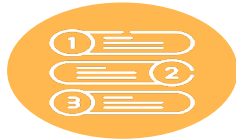
**Step 2**
Perform Needs Assessment

**Step 3**
Prioritize Needs

**Step 4**
Outline Solutions

**Step 5**
Implement Solutions

**Step 6**
Account For All Funds

# Strategic Approach (Continued)

**Step 4 – Outline solutions to address needs**

- Solutions should be data driven and fact based (easily displayed to community)

- Should identify all financial resources available to the district to implement

- All outcomes should provide long-term value to the district to address current and future limitations

**Step 5 – Implement solutions in accordance with all state and federal guidelines (facilities portion)**

**Step 6 – Internally account for all funds in accordance with state and federal guidelines**

**Step 1**
Identify Team and Resources
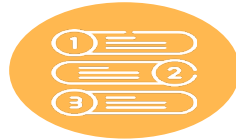
**Step 2**
Perform Needs Assessment

**Step 3**
Prioritize Needs

**Step 4**
Outline Solutions

**Step 5**
Implement Solutions

**Step 6**
Account For All Funds

# What Should Schools be Doing Right Now?

- Take a deep breath.

- Put together **In-Person Instruction Plan.**

- Rebuild connections with students, families, and community.

- Focus on the three areas below as to how you're going to be strategic in using your ESSER III funding:

| #1 | #2 | #3 |
|---|---|---|
| What do we need for immediate relief? | What intermediate needs will we have in the next 6-12 months? | What shifts are needed in existing operations and assets to meet this future need? |

# AVAILABLE TOOLS & RESOURCES

- ASHRAE/CDC Position Documents

- Designing infectious disease resilience into school buildings

- ASHRAE position document on infectious aerosols

- CDC Guidelines for Ventilation: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html

- ICS Healthy Buildings Checklist: www.ics-builds.com

  o Facility assessments, prioritization, strategic planning, and other resources available

o Facilities health checklists – reach out to Jeff Schiltz



**Please contact Jeff Schiltz at 218-348-0751
or jeff.schiltz@ics-builds.com for more information**

Q&A

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# Stay Connected with ICS

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