

Plans for Federal CARES Funding

The CARES Act:

The *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*, also known as the CARES Act, was a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 116th U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump on March 27, 2020, in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

The CARES Act of March 2020 included money for schools. Our Belmond-Klemme allocation was \$124,000. We have spent all of this money on masks, sanitizer, cleaning supplies, personnel, absences due to the COVID illness, and many other things. The fund was quite helpful to our school district.

CARES funding could be used for very broad purposes, including the following:

- Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity);
- Providing mental health services and supports;
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities;
- Training and professional development for staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases;
- Providing meals to eligible students;
- Providing technology for online learning to all students;
- Summer learning; and
- Other “unique needs”.

A Second Round of Stimulus:

At the end of December, 2020, Congress passed another emergency funding measure, the *Omnibus COVID Relief Deal*. Again, it included money for schools across the nation. Our BK allocation increased four-fold over the amount of last March for an additional \$540,815.

The additional funding came with the stipulation that the money must be spent before the end of federal Fiscal Year 2023. For us that means June 30, 2023.

A Third Round of Stimulus:

On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Senate-amended version of the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill, H.R.1319, the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*.

Details are not yet available, but we currently expect our Belmond-Klemme allocation to increase again by maybe around 220% to around \$1.2 million dollars in addition to the \$540,815 we have already been allocated. However, the timeline remains the same for this third round of stimulus. The additional funding must be spent before the end of federal Fiscal Year 2023 or June 30, 2023.

Ideas for Federal Funds:

We are looking at expanding our staffing for two years using the CARES money that has come to us through the federal COVID stimulus package. Our two top priorities at this time are

- a mathematics interventionist (like Title I math) and
- an additional counselor, perhaps serving grades 5-8 as a junior high counselor.

Recommended Action:

I recommend the board move to authorize the hiring of the following three positions, their salaries to be paid from federal CARES money flowing from COVID stimulus package:

- a mathematics interventionist teacher (like Title I math),
- an additional counselor serving grades 5-8 as a junior high counselor, and
- a junior-senior high dean of students working with at-risk students and remediation of struggling learners; the position to include 25 percent administrative duties with an annual stipend of \$10,000 for the administrative hours beyond the teacher contract.

Expanded E.L. Summer School

Our English Language Learner teachers are looking at an opportunity to use some of our federal CARES funding to benefit our EL students.

Subject to permission from the school board, the two teachers intend to target instruction toward EL students in a two-weeks session to reinforce skills at the end of the current school year (June). They would also like to give students a head start on the next school year with a three-week session in August.

Their plan will include bus services.

Recommended Action:

In light of the recent increase in our federal stimulus funding, I recommend the board engage in discussion around some of the ideas they may have for our temporary funds.