

**Imagine Me Leadership Charter School**  
**American Rescue Plan (ARP) Spending Plan**

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**Introduction**

In March 2021, President Biden signed into law the \$1.9 trillion **American Rescue Plan (ARP)**. This groundbreaking legislation is designed to help individuals and institutions across our country address the impact of COVID-19 and the resultant disruptions in our schools, our workplaces and our daily lives. Under the new law, **more than \$130 billion** in federal funds will be provided to help the nation’s K-12 schools, including charter schools, return to in-person instruction and address the impact of the COVID 19 disruption on students’ learning and social-emotional health.

In New York, more than \$9 billion in ARP funds have been allocated to school districts and charter schools.

***Imagine Me Leadership Charter School has been awarded***

***\$852,505 in ARP ESSER funds,***

***\$379,066 in CARES ACT 2 (ESSER II) funds and***

***\$80,316 in CARE ACT 1 (ESSER I) funds.***

***Total ARP funding = \$1,309,887***

We intend to use these funds to support implementation of in-person instruction, improve health and safety throughout our classrooms and school building(s) and strengthen our academic programs and social-emotional supports. We are grateful to our parents,

teachers and entire school community for their input as we developed our applications and plans for spending ARP ESSER, ESSER II, and ESSER I funds.

**Our School’s American Rescue Spending Plan (ARP Plan):** Federal legislation and federal and state agency guidance regarding the ARP, along with the 2021-22 New York State budget, require each local education agency (LEA)—including each NYS charter school—that receives funding under the ARP to post on its website a plan summarizing how these funds will be spent. The primary purpose of ARP funding is to help schools like ours overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 disruption and succeed in the coming school years. Our ARP plan will show how our use of ARP funds will create, maintain or expand “evidence-based” programs, services and/or resources that improve outcomes for our students. In addition, our ARP plan has been developed with input from parents, educators and other school stakeholders. As expected, we have engaged stakeholders from across our school community to provide input into our ARP plan.

The **Imagine Me Leadership Charter School ARP Spending Plan** satisfies the ARP legal requirements and summarizes how our school intends to invest ARP funds to improve health and safety, academic programs and social-emotional supports for our students. Our ARP plan ensures that we will use ARP funds to address specific school needs while aligning our spending with the objectives, requirements and priorities of the ARP legislation and the 2021-22 NYS budget. Accordingly, our ARP plan prioritizes spending on **non-recurring expenses** and **demonstrably sustainable recurring expenses** in the following ARP-allowable areas:

- ***Safely returning students to in-person instruction***—Imagine Me Leadership Charter School is committed to the health and safety of our children, staff and community as we engage in in-person instruction in the new school year. During the last many months, we have worked cooperatively with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE), the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and other agencies—and we have invested significant funds from our school budget—to address the COVID-19 pandemic, make our school building safe and ensure compliance with regulations and guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New York State Department of Health (DOH), NYSED and other relevant agencies. To support our efforts to ensure safety, Imagine Me Leadership Charter School intends to invest school budget funds in purchasing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support distancing and other

measures to help us comply with relevant CDC, SED, DOH and other requirements and guidelines.

- ***Maximizing in-person instruction time***—Our school will expand and maximize in-person instruction time primarily by providing in-person high-intensity school-day and/or after-school tutoring in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and Spring Break programs in 2022-23. To accomplish this Imagine Me Leadership will implement the school’s Co-Teaching Model during the funding period. By increasing the number of professional staff members Imagine Me Leadership has increased the number of trained adults interacting directly with students. In addition, we will support students in transitioning successfully from remote to in-person learning through a series of interesting and engaging afterschool programs through both 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.
- ***Operating schools and meeting the needs of students***— ARP funds will be spent to support and improve school operations, including support for complying with COVID-19 safety requirements and protocols. We are using school budget funds for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). Professional and Support staffing to focus on the needs of each student has been a major focus of ARP ESSER and ESSER II funding. The aim of the initiative is to stimulate and re-engage students and to meet the specific academic and social, emotional, and mental health needs of each student. The rental of a portion of the cost of 23,142 square feet of classroom space with ARP ESSER funds will ensure appropriate social distancing and other needs created by the COVID 19 pandemic.
- ***Purchasing educational technology***—ESSER II and ESSER 1 funds will be used for the purchase of educational technology. Specifically, we intend to use these funds to purchase Smartboards, Newline Boards, computers for students and staff members, licensing of assessment and other software, including supporting the regular day, afterschool, summer programs, Saturday Academy, and Spring Break.
- ***Addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on students, including the impacts of interrupted instruction and learning loss and the impacts on low-income students, students with disabilities (SWDs), English language learners (ELLs) and homeless students***—Our school intends to use ARP ESSER, ESSER II and ESSER I funds to address the impact of COVID-19 on all students, including at-risk students, by purchasing instructional

materials and hiring additional instructional and academic intervention staff. We will provide additional in-person academic support through high-intensity tutoring and summer programming.

- ***Implementing evidence-based strategies to address students' social, emotional, mental health and academic needs***—We will use ARP funds to integrate evidence-based strategies to meet our students' social, emotional and mental health needs into our overall curricula and programs. ARP funds will support the development of a curriculum focused on helping our teachers and counseling staff programs support the social and emotional growth and development of our students and families.
- ***Offering evidence-based summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs***—We will use ARP funds to support evidence-based summer and after-school instructional programs, high-intensity in-school and out-of-school time (OST) tutoring. All of the strategies, practices and resources we intend to invest ARP funds in are grounded in research and/or have demonstrated effectiveness in improving schools and student outcomes.

### **Elements of Imagine Me Leadership Charter School's ARP Spending Plan**

The **Imagine Me Leadership Charter School** ARP Plan shows how ARP funds will be invested to support the school in each of the above-listed ARP-allowable areas. Our goal is to help our students and school community transition successfully from the COVID-19 disrupted educational experience of 2020-21 to a consistent high-quality in-person educational experience in and after 2021-22. Specifically, we are spending ARP funds to: a) ensure the health and safety of students and staff; b) support the academic growth and achievement of students; and c) promote our students' social emotional health and development. Our school's investment of ARP ESSER funds will be coordinated with spending of other federal and non-federal funds including per-pupil, Title I, CARES Act ESSER I, and ESSER 2 funding to maximize its impact and improve programs and outcomes for students.

**We intend to use ARP funds to:**

- ***Ensure the safe return of students to in-person instruction.*** **Imagine Me Leadership Charter School** will continue to implement health and safety protocols and guidance

established by the DOH, the CDC, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the New York State Governor's Office. Our health and safety policies and practices are described the Health and Safety Plan sections of our School Reopening Plan, which is posted on our website and incorporated by reference into this Plan for spending ARP funds.

We recognize that our Health and Safety Plan and School Reopening Plan will likely be revised to comply with new legislative and regulatory guidance in the next few months. We also recognize that protocols and guidance may change as information about COVID-19 and effective health and safety measures evolve. Accordingly, we will monitor the guidance provided by these agencies on an ongoing basis and make changes to our policies, practices and spending as needed to conform to new health and safety requirements and recommendations.

We intend to use school budget funds to promote the health and safety of our students and staff through extensive personal protective equipment. Specifically, we will use these to purchase sprayers, masks, desk shields, thermometers, and disinfectant supplies to enable us to maintain high-quality instruction while complying with CDC guidance and protocols regarding distancing.

- \$468,605 in ARP ESSER funds will support a portion of the one year of spacing leasing costs to enable safe and adequate classroom space, based upon social distancing and other requirements.
- **Maximize In-Person Instruction Time. Imagine Me Leadership Charter School** will use ARP funds to expand and improve in-person instruction in 2021-22 and beyond. In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we pivoted from in-person instruction on-site in our school building to home-based remote learning using online technologies. Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, we have engaged most of our students in on-site in-person learning, with some interruptions caused by incidents of students or staff members testing positive for COVID-19 or spikes in city or neighborhood residents testing positive for COVID-19. While our in-person and remote learning over the last 18 months have provided continuity in instruction, it was challenging for many of our students and families. We recognize that effective and consistent in-person instruction has many benefits over remote instruction and/or

interrupted in-person instruction. These benefits range from more consistent direct teacher-to-student time in a structured learning environment to greater opportunities for student social interaction and relationship-building with teachers and peers. Accordingly, we are committed to establishing permanent in-school academic programs, re-engaging all our students and addressing the impacts of lost instructional time. Specifically, through the introduction of our co-teaching model, we intend to invest ARP funds in:

- ***Tutoring***—A key component of our strategy to accelerate student learning and address the educational impacts of the COVID-19 disruption is in-person high-intensity tutoring that will be provided during and outside of the school day.

***Our use of ARP funds to support high-intensity tutoring is consistent with the ARP objective of maximizing in-person instruction and addressing the impact of the COVID-19 disruption on student learning.*** High-intensity tutoring is one of the key evidence-based strategies recommended by the U.S. Education Department to accelerate student learning and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 disruption. (*ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs, Volume 2*, pages 29-30 and research cited therein, <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>). Our high-intensity tutoring program will adopt the effective practices listed in the “*Evidence-informed Tutoring Practices Checklist*” endorsed in the Handbook by the U.S. Department of Education including:

- *Using trained educators as tutors*—Imagine Me Leadership teachers will provide tutoring with oversight by our school’s leadership during afterschool and Saturday Academy programming. .
- *Conducting tutoring sessions during the school day, as well as after-school and Saturday.* Our tutoring program will provide intensive tutoring in ELA, Math and test-prep during designated periods during school days and in after-school sessions and during Saturday Academy sessions.
- *Providing high-dosage tutoring each week*—Our approach to tutoring does not consist of infrequent, “drop-in” or “scattershot” sessions but, rather, provides an integrated series of tutoring sessions targeted to address student needs and delivered over a period of several weeks.

- *Using an evidence-based program and practices*—Our tutoring program will adapt evidence-based strategies and practices to address the specific needs of our students. We will also employ the effective tutoring practices endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education in the Handbook (pages 29-30), including quizzing, asking deep explanatory questions, spacing learning over time, incorporating worked example solutions with problem-solving exercises and connecting and integrating abstract and concrete representations of concepts.
- *Summer Academic Programming*—We will engage our students in intensive in-person academic instruction in summer school programs during Summer 2022. The summer programming will be overseen and implemented by our school’s leadership and faculty. Our ARP fund investments will be coordinated with spending from other revenue sources, including our general budget and ESSER II.

*Our use of ARP funds to support summer academic programming is consistent with the ARP objective of maximizing in-person instruction and addressing the impact of the COVID-19 disruption on student learning.* Summer academic programs are one of the primary evidence-based strategies recommended by the U.S. Education Department to accelerate student learning and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 disruption. (*ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students’ Needs, Volume 2*, pages 31-32 and research cited therein <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>) Our summer program will adopt the effective practices endorsed in the Handbook by the U.S. Department of Education including voluntary, extensive (several hours per day) and rigorous instruction in ELA and Math delivered by experienced and certified teachers.

- *Purchase educational technology*— We intend to use \$142,252 in ARP ESSER, ESSER II and ESSER 1 funds (10.8% of our combined federal allocation) to purchase, Smart Boards, Chromebooks, and other computers, site licensing, and related software, supports for the regular day, afterschool, summer, Saturday Academy and Spring Break programs. By expanding our use of educational technology we will be able to improve our use of

Digital and Blended learning strategies in and outside of the classroom. This is especially important as teachers and students address the impact of the disrupted educational experience of the last 18 months and transition to a more consistently in-person post-pandemic learning experience. Teachers can support differentiation in teaching and to make academic content and lessons more engaging to students which, in turn, will support learning acceleration. (see Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis: A Review of Evidence, United States Agency for International Development, November 2020, [https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/Technical\\_Report\\_Accelerating\\_Learning\\_Post-Crisis\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/Technical_Report_Accelerating_Learning_Post-Crisis_Full_Report.pdf)) These additions will promote interactivity and classroom collaboration and provide teachers with greater flexibility in their curriculum development, lesson planning, assessments and instruction.

- ***Address the impacts of COVID-19 on students, including the impacts of interrupted instruction and learning loss and the impacts on low-income students, students with disabilities (SWDs), English language learners (ELLs) and homeless students***— In addition to the above-discussed ARP investments in tutoring and summer academic programming, we will invest a significant portion of our ARP funding in expanding and supporting our instructional staff to provide targeted support to all students and, in particular, at-risk students. Many of our planned expenditures in this area will support salaries and stipends for educators. Our intention is to use ARP funds to help us bring on new hires and to reward and incentivize specialist educators and other instructional staff during the period of ARP funding. Following this period, we will continue these positions with funding from our general budget and/or other revenue sources (e.g., Title I).
- ***Our ARP investments increasing staff members and enabling afterschool, summer and other programming total \$701,250 (53.5) % of combined federal funds) will include:***
  - \$322,200 in ARP ESSER (\$161,100) and ESSER II (\$161,000) funds for two years for two professional staff positions; a behavioral therapist, and Technology Coordinator who will with the social, emotional and mental health needs while supporting their use of technology in academic work.
  - \$155,250 in ESSER II funds for one year for three paraprofessionals



- \$223,800 in ARP ESSER funds over two years will support staff of afterschool, summer, Saturday Academy, and Spring Break programs
  - \$206,250 for professional staff
  - \$16,750 for support staff
- ***Implement evidence-based strategies to address students' social, emotional, mental health and academic needs***—We are committed to supporting the social, emotional, mental health and academic needs of our students. We are especially concerned with the social, emotional and mental health needs of our many students who have experienced stress and trauma during the COVID-19 disruption. Our approach to addressing social, emotional and mental health issues is grounded in the effective evidence-based practices outlined by the U.S. Department of Education in the Handbook including: a) building strong and trusting relationships among students, families, and educators; b) establishing safe, positive, and stable environments; c) explicitly teaching critical social, emotional, and academic skills; d) actively engaging students in meaningful and culturally and linguistically relevant learning experiences rooted in high academic expectations for all students; e) providing supportive and specific feedback to encourage skill growth across all domains. To support these efforts, we intend to use \$263,800 in ARP funds (15% of our combined allocation) to support students with a variety of programs designed to support their social, emotional, and mental health needs.
  - \$223,800 in ARP ESSER funds (26.31%) over two years for a variety of after school evidenced-based in-school, afterschool, summer and Saturday Academy programs - The presentation of a variety of these evidenced-based programs is aimed at providing for the Social, Emotional and Mental needs of students. Programs include: Chorus, Chess, Sports – Basketball, Soccer and Track, Dance, and Robotics.
- ***Offering evidence-based summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs***— As discussed earlier, we will use ARP funds to support summer and other OST programming.

## **Review and Evaluation of Effectiveness**

Imagine Me Leadership Charter School will review this Plan at least every six months. The purpose of this review is to: a) ensure that it is implemented with fidelity; b) measure and document the impact of ARP fund spending; and c) modify the plan, as appropriate, to improve the quality and outcomes of the programs, services and resources supported by ARP funds. The review will be coordinated by the school's Leadership Team and will include input from teachers, parents, students and other school stakeholders. To this end, we will engage stakeholders through use of surveys, public meetings and other means. The results of each review—including changes in ARP-funded services and activities—will be posted on our website and shared with the school community.