



# CLARKSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION **DEMONSTRATES INNOVATIVE USES OF ESSER FUNDS**

*By Haley Querbach for the Clarksville Community School Corporation*



Tina Bennett, *Superintendent,  
Clarksville Community School  
Corporation*

**C**larksville Community Schools educates nearly 1,400 students from across Southern Indiana every school year. An all “A” and “B” district, Clarksville offers a small school community paired with big opportunities. Clarksville students boast high graduation rates year in and year out, and one out of every three graduates earns an honors diploma. Clarksville High

School graduates go on to become doctors, lawyers, ministers, business owners, professors, collegiate athletes and more. This is an ever-growing corporation with student success at the heart of every decision.

Clarksville stands out in so many ways, but one thing it shares with school districts all around the world is the need to provide safe, healthy in-person education during the coronavirus pandemic. This unprecedented crisis has challenged schools like

never before, resulting in learning gaps that must urgently be addressed and bringing increased attention to students’ social, emotional, and mental health.

Federal funding provided in response to the pandemic presents a unique opportunity to drive improvements that make schools even stronger than before. Clarksville’s allocation of ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds totals a little more than \$3 million.

“When it came to deciding how to implement this money in our corporation,” explained Clarksville Superintendent Tina Bennett, “the main goal was to apply it to initiatives and programs that were forward thinking. It was our effort to be proactive instead of reactive. We realize that these funds have the power to

**“IT WAS OUR EFFORT TO BE PROACTIVE  
INSTEAD OF REACTIVE. WE REALIZE THAT  
THESE FUNDS HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE  
STUDENT SUCCESS WHILE CATAPULTING OUR  
CORPORATION FORWARD.”**

– Tina Bennett, *Superintendent, Clarksville Community School Corporation*

# A Simple Way to Get Your Policies Online

The Indiana School Boards Association has partnered with BoardDocs to deliver their policies and publications directly to BoardDocs instances.

## BoardDocs can:

- Support the management of multiple books (e.g., policies, administrative regulations, forms/exhibits, handbooks, etc.)
- Support locally defined policy categories, code numbers, and policy titles
- Minimize problems with version control of draft and final policies
- Include robust word-processing, tracking changes, and editing/layout capabilities
- Allow role-specific access (e.g., editing versus view only)
- Allow full-text searching on local district content as well as access to non-district content through BoardDocs MetaSearch
- Permit electronic linking to internal and external resources and reference material (e.g., to the state statutes)
- And more!

The BoardDocs PL is for groups that do not already have an online policy management system in place or are looking for a better, more cost-effective system. Districts that subscribe to BoardDocs LT or BoardDocs Pro Meeting Management Systems have all of the functionality of the policy feature built in!



**BoardDocs**

A DILIGENT BRAND

[boarddocs.com](http://boarddocs.com)

inspire student success while catapulting our corporation forward.”

Clarksville created a multi-year spending plan that looks beyond short-term recovery efforts and Covid mitigation measures like ventilation improvements and PPE to build a foundation for sustained transformation.

### MODERN CLASSROOMS PROJECT

The first area that Clarksville Community Schools leaders chose to apply ESSER funds was the Modern Classrooms Project (MCP). This research-backed instructional model serves students at all levels of understanding, both inside and outside the classroom, by combining blended instruction through teacher-created videos, a structure where students control the pace of their own learning, and grading where students progress from one lesson to another once they demonstrate mastery. The innovative teaching model empowers teachers to differentiate instruction and build strong relationships with students by leveraging technology to maximize 1:1 and small group interactions. In Modern Classrooms, teachers spend less time managing student behavior and more time supporting student success. Students are appropriately challenged each day and develop ownership in their learning. They see a purpose in every task completed as they work toward mastery of each skill.

Clarksville teachers who have opted-in to the initiative are enthusiastic about the change. Jaime Lamkin, a seventh-grade math teacher at Clarksville Middle School and a top 10 finalist in 2021 for Indiana Teacher of The Year, explained how the model empowers teachers to meet the needs of all students. “When I began the process of being trained in Modern Classroom this summer, I was extremely excited about the prospect of learning a new way to differentiate instruction. Modern Classroom provides a structure that allows students to work at their

own pace in order to learn the material and achieve their highest capability. While the plans I made had to be greatly changed due to the ramifications of the pandemic leading to me selecting a few units to use for Modern Classroom, I still see the potential this structure provides in truly accelerating learning for those students who are often held back in a typical classroom while also providing more opportunities for remediation and more individualized instruction for those students who require more time and attention.” Lamkin continued, “This year has brought about struggles which have not allowed me to use the Modern







Classroom structure as much or how I intended. It takes a great deal of time to prepare each Modern Classroom unit. If schools are willing to regularly provide teachers with extra time to plan and prepare for the use of Modern Classroom within their instruction, I believe that Modern Classroom is a powerful tool that would allow us to provide more individualized instruction to ensure every student can achieve their highest potential. With extra time, support, and resources, Modern Classroom provides a structure that allows for true differentiation to take place. Differentiation is the answer to many of education’s struggles, and Modern Classroom is the best program that I’ve seen in my 23 years of education as far as providing teachers with concrete steps to differentiate.”

*For more information, visit [www.modernclassrooms.org/indiana](http://www.modernclassrooms.org/indiana).*

### CAMP INVENTION

Clarksville has prioritized interventions and supports for at-risk and disadvantaged students who have incurred the most significant educational setbacks as a result of the disruptions caused by the pandemic. But to ensure that high-achieving students aren’t forgotten, the district chose to use ESSER Funds for scholarships for high-level learners to attend a summer camp called Camp Invention. This is a STEM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) camp that allows high-ability students to design, construct, and test creations. During this experience, 80 Clarksville Community Schools students were able to express their creativity while working collaboratively with other like-minded students. Camp Invention is focused on nurturing creativity, innovation, real-world problem solving, and the spirit of invention. Students walked away with skills and experiences in leadership, perseverance, resourcefulness, and a mindset that encourages entrepreneurship.

Abby Coffman, Clarksville’s High Ability Coordinator, shared, “Our students were

incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to attend Camp Invention subsidized entirely by our school corporation funds, something that otherwise would have been impossible for many of our families. Teachers and students both benefit from constructing their understanding of concepts like velocity and trajectory while ‘chucking’ ducks at various world famous landmarks or testing the principles of sound by building their own working microphone. The week of Camp Invention made lasting impacts on our budding inventors and their families, and our school community is stronger for it.”

In addition, Clarksville has given its teachers the opportunity to use ESSER Funds to pay for ELL (English Language Learner) and High Ability Certifications. Five teachers are currently taking advantage of this opportunity.

### ACCELERATING LEARNING

Clarksville Community Schools invested in extended day opportunities to help close learning gaps caused by the pandemic. Extra learning is provided to any student who would like to take part, whether it’s for the whole session, or if they would like to pop in on an as-needed basis. Free transportation makes this learning accessible to all students. Teachers are motivated to give extra time, as they receive a stipend to participate.

Stephanie Anderson, ELL Coordinator/Extended Day Learning Tutor, commented, “One of the benefits I’m seeing through extended day learning is that my students are having opportunities to enrich their creative thinking while filling in the gaps in their foundational skills.”

Clarksville also enhanced its summer programming with the launch of an intensive academic summer camp for grades 3-12. Students who enrolled in the one-month camp were provided both transportation and meals.

To increase the tools in each teacher and support staffs’ toolbox, Clarksville Community Schools partnered with Centerstone on training in the areas of children’s mental health, trauma-informed schools, LGBTQ cultural competency, collaborative and proactive solutions, and implicit bias.

Clarksville is also expanding Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The district is moving slowly with this initiative, in order to be intentional with the development of the program. Clarksville is currently in Phase 1 and has partnered with Clark & Floyd Systems of Care to facilitate schoolwide focus groups to identify the needs of students, staff, and families. During Phase 2, the district will complete a mental health profile assessment, with the



“ONE OF THE **BENEFITS** I’M SEEING THROUGH EXTENDED DAY LEARNING IS THAT MY STUDENTS ARE HAVING **OPPORTUNITIES TO ENRICH THEIR CREATIVE THINKING** WHILE FILLING IN THE GAPS IN THEIR FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS.”

– Stephanie Anderson, *ELL Coordinator, Clarksville Community School Corporation*

ultimate goal of developing its very own Clarksville Systems of Care.

The Clarksville Community School Corporation administrative team and school board have put deliberate thought and effort into the creation of a multi-year ESSER spending plan that invests in innovation and protects the health and safety of the school community.

A series of exciting initiatives are underway with the potential to increase student motivation and engagement, improve staff retention, and help teachers avoid burnout.

The strategic approach to spending ESSER funds will benefit the students and staff of the Clarksville Community School Corporation for years to come.” 🐼