

Medford School District Purchases 12,710 sq. Ft. Building to House New Online School and Tillamook School District launches Virtual Academy.

Submission from Natalie Hurd, Communications Director, Medford School District:



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We spent \$1.9 million of our \$14.7 million ESSER II funds to purchase a 12,710 sq. ft. building

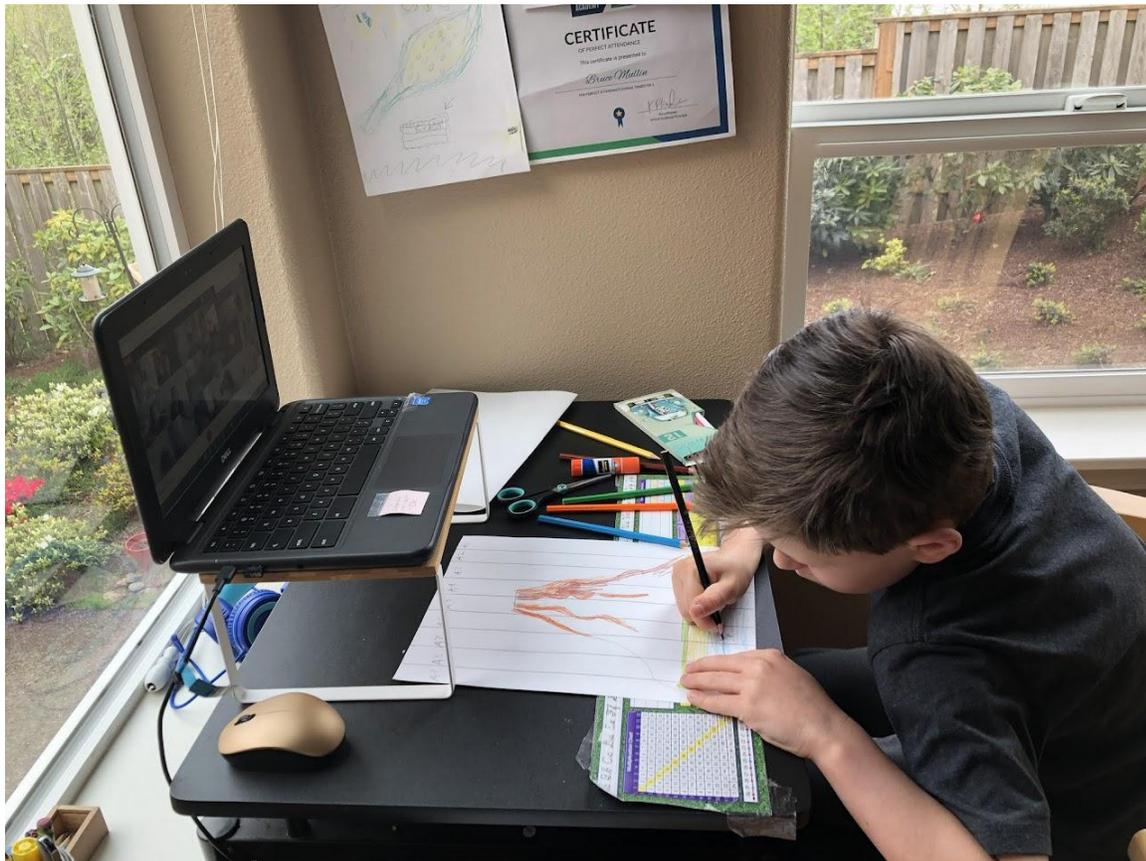
The District had challenges with inadequate space for Elementary and Middle School students and staff before the COVID-19 pandemic. This problem was exacerbated by the need for social distancing to safely educate students in person in a COVID-19 environment. It allowed us to pivot quickly to meet the need for additional space for students and teachers.

In our experience, modular buildings have not been a good investment for schools. This allowed us to purchase a sound facility with longevity that served the District well during COVID and nested well with the District's plan coming out of COVID to accelerate learning and offer an option to meet students where they were. A Bond was not likely to pass in our area in a timely manner, and the building was effectively turnkey for us because it was last used by the local community college for classroom instruction, and major upgrades to the facility were done by the owner to support it, including new heating and air conditioning. It houses our online school, which grew from 40 to nearly 700 students during COVID due to parent demand for an online alternative. We heard from many families throughout the pandemic about the need for an online option.

It has continued to serve hundreds of students per year post-COVID. It has emerged as an effective component of a post-COVID model of education where choice and agency are critical.

Another school district that has invested ESSER funds to support online learning is the Tillamook School District.

Submission from Jennifer Guarcello, Communication/Grant/Foundation Director & TSD9 Preschool Co-director



ESSER funds have allowed the Tillamook SD to establish a K-12 virtual school. This program has been a great option for students who are medically fragile, students who access learning better in a different environment, and students at the secondary level who are interested in graduating early or are deficient in credits. The virtual program is differentiated for each student and provides synchronous and asynchronous instructional opportunities.

Many families were concerned about sending students back to school after COVID. Some had medically fragile family members in their homes, some wanted flexibility in their child's education, and some discovered that their children accessed their learning more successfully from home.

