

Section: Narratives - ARP ESSER Assurances

ARP ESSER APPLICATION

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recognizes the extraordinary efforts made by LEAs, School Entities, IUs, Career and Technical Centers (CTCs), and Neglected and Delinquent Institutions (N & Ds) (for purposes of this application referred to as Grantee) to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The application requests information about: (1) Needs and impacts resulting from the pandemic, (2) Stakeholder engagement in the development of local plans to respond to these needs and impacts, (3) Specific elements in the Plan for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds; and (4) Plans for monitoring and measuring progress. As submitted and accepted by PDE in final form, this application shall become part of the Grant Agreement for ARP ESSER funds as Appendix B.

ARP ESSER Fund Assurances

Please complete each of the following assurances prior to plan submission:



The Grantee will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the Grantee's plan for monitoring funds and internal controls under the CARES and CRRSA Acts; addressing potential sources of waste, fraud, and abuse; conducting random audits; or other tools).



The Grantee will complete quarterly Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA) reports and comply with all PDE reporting requirements, including on matters such as:

- **How the Grantee is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;**
- **Overall plans and policies related to Grantee support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;**
- **Data on each Grantee's mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;**
- **Grantee uses of funds to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;**
- **Grantee uses of funds to sustain and support access to Grantee-supported early childhood education programs;**
- **Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on**

- personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);
- Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;
 - Requirements under the FFATA; and
 - Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER fund use.



The Grantee will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of: (a) the United States Department of Education and/or its Inspector General; (b) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority; (c) the Pennsylvania Department of Education; and/or (d) the Pennsylvania Auditor General, Pennsylvania Inspector General, or any other state agency.



Records pertaining to ARP ESSER Funds, including financial records related to the use of grant funds, will be tracked and retained separately from those records related to the Grantee's use of other Federal funds.



The Grantee will maintain inventory records, purchase orders and receipts for equipment (over \$5,000) purchased, all computing devices, and special purpose equipment (\$300 - \$4,999), and will conduct a physical inventory every two years. Please note: inventory of equipment purchased with federal funds must be broken out by funding source.



Any Grantee receiving funding under this program will have on file with the SEA a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).



The Grantee will conduct its operations so that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under the ARP ESSER program or activity based on race; color; national origin, which includes a person's limited English proficiency or English learner status and a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics;

sex; age; or disability. These non-discrimination obligations arise under Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, the LEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the United States Department of Education under any of these statutes.



The Grantee will implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act.



The Grantee will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from underserved racial or ethnic groups and gender groups, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migrant students, and other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the Grantee) as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act.



The LEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements, including but not limited to complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act. Under Maintenance of Equity, per-pupil funding from state and local sources and staffing levels for *high poverty schools* may not be decreased by an amount that exceeds LEA-wide reductions in per-pupil funding and staffing levels for *all schools* served by the LEA¹. High poverty schools are the 25 percent of schools serving the highest percent of economically disadvantaged students in the LEA as measured by information LEAs submitted in PIMS that includes individual student data and identifying if the student meets economically disadvantaged criteria. This data is used to calculate school poverty percentages. Note: An LEA is exempt from the Maintenance of Equity requirement if the LEA has a total enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students, operates a single school, serves all students in each grade span in a single school, or demonstrates an exceptional or uncontrollable circumstance, as determined by the United States Secretary of Education.

¹Calculations for Maintenance of Equity: Per Pupil Funding from combined State and local funding = Total LEA funding from combined State and local funding for all schools served by the LEA in the given fiscal year, divided by the number of children enrolled in all schools served by the LEA in the given fiscal year. Full time equivalent staff = Total full-time equivalent staff in all schools served by the LEA in the given fiscal year, divided by the number of children enrolled in all schools served by the LEA in the given fiscal year. These calculations should be completed for all schools in the LEA as well as for high poverty schools in the LEA for FY 2021-22 and 2022-23. Reductions must not be greater for high poverty schools than for all schools in the LEA.



The LEA's Health and Safety Plan will include (1) how the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff; (2) how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services; (3) how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC: (a) universal and correct wearing of masks; (b) modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); (c) handwashing and respiratory etiquette; (d) cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; (e) contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments; (f) diagnostic and screening testing; (g) efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities; (h) appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and (i) coordination with state and local health officials.



The LEA will review its Health and Safety Plan at least every six months during the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period and make revisions as appropriate. When determining whether revisions are necessary, the LEA will take into consideration significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools and will seek public input and take public input into account.



The LEA's Health and Safety Plan will be made publicly available on the LEA website and must be written in a language that parents/caregivers can understand or be orally translated for parent/caregivers and must be provided in alternate format upon request by a parent/caregiver who is an individual with a disability.