

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner

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Department of Education
and Early Development

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Department of Education approves Alaska's ARP State Plan, distributes remaining \$119 million

JUNEAU – Friday the U.S. Department of Education announced the approval of Alaska's American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) plan and distributed remaining ARP ESSER funds to the state. The State Plan describes how Alaska plans to use ARP ESSER funds to safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and equitably expand opportunity for students who need it most, particularly those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholder input guided the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) in creating the plan. Beginning in May of this year, DEED held webinars for parents, school personnel, advocates for underserved populations, and the general public. In partnership with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center, DEED used the online collaborative platform ThoughtExchange to gather feedback priorities for ARP funded interventions. More than 2,100 people, including the State Board of Education, provided feedback for both DEED and local school districts before DEED submitted Alaska's State Plan on June 18, 2021.

"Alaska's ARP ESSER State Plan, informed by the five priorities of Alaska's Education Challenge, supports face-to-face instruction; expands social, emotional and mental health supports; and implements strategies to reduce impacts of lost instructional time," said Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. "We appreciate the U.S. Department of Education allowing Alaska to utilize ARP resources for our students and their families."

Alaska's total ARP ESSER allocation is approximately \$358 million. Two-thirds of that total - about \$239 million - was released on March 24, 2021. With the approval of Alaska's State Plan, the U.S. Department of Education is releasing the final \$119 million. Over ninety percent of the ARP ESSER funds are awarded directly to school districts who work with their local school boards on how to spend these funds.

Alaska's ARP ESSER State Plan, resources for districts, and other information is available online at <https://education.alaska.gov/safeschools/infectiousdisease/arp-state-plan>.

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The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an "Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day."

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