

The ESSER III Plan for Spending Federal COVID Relief Funds

Background:

Under the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER or ESSER III), our school district is in receipt of substantial federal funds designated for COVID-19 mitigation and relief. The state is requiring all schools to submit a report of assurances stating the school district is properly utilizing the federal funds.

Recommended Action:

I recommend the board move to approve the plan as it appears on the next few pages.

The ESSER III Plan for Spending Federal COVID Relief Funds

Introduction

On April 21, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) released its American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER or ESSER III) state plan template for state education agencies (SEAs) to complete to receive the remaining third of ESSER III funds. In addition to the template, the USED also released ESSER III interim final requirements related to SEA consultation, district ESSER III plans, and district plans for a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services.

Programmatic, Fiscal and Reporting Assurances

YES

- ✓ 1) In accepting ESSER III funds, the local education agency (LEA) assures it will submit a plan to the Iowa Department of Education (Department) that contains such information as the Department may reasonably require, including all information required by the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) Interim Final Requirements on ESSER III. The LEA will submit Part II of the ESSER III plan by August 23, 2021.
- ✓ 2) The LEA will use ESSER III funds for activities allowable under section 2001(e) of the ARP Act and will reserve at least 20% of its ESSER III funds to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions
- ✓ 3) The LEA will comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act.
- ✓ 4) The LEA assures either:
 - It will, within 30 days of receiving ESSER III funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a plan for the safe return of in-person instruction and continuity of services as required in section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP and in USED's Interim Final Requirements or
 - It developed and made publicly available on the LEA's website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP (March 11, 2021) that meets ARP requirements.
- ✓ 5) The LEA assures that it will meaningfully engage with the following stakeholders during development of its ESSER III plan and take such input into account in the development of the plan:
 - Students;
 - Families;
 - School and district administrators, including special education administrators;
 - Teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions;
 - Tribes (if applicable);
 - Civil rights and disability rights organizations (if applicable); and
 - Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students (if applicable).
- ✓ 6) The LEA assures that it will seek public comment on its ESSER III plan and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.
- ✓ 7) The LEA assures that it will review its Return-to-Learn plan periodically and at least every six months to ensure it remains relevant and meets all statutory and regulatory requirements. The LEA also assures that it will seek public comment on whether the plan requires revisions at least every six months. And if it is so deemed that revisions are necessary, the LEA will provide the public opportunity to provide comments on such revisions.
- ✓ 8) The LEA will comply with all reporting requirements at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Department or USED may reasonably require including on matters such as:

- Overall plans and policies related to State 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 school's mode of instruction (remote, hybrid, in-person) and conditions;
- How the LEA 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 addressing COVID-19 in schools;
- LEA 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;
- LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;
- Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ESSER III funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ESSER III 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 Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA); and
- Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ESSER III funds.

Note: Nothing in this assurance requires the district to adopt CDC guidance. According to the USED: The requirement does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.

- ✓ 9) The LEA assures that it will retain records pertaining to the ESSER III award under 2 C.F.R. § 200.334 and 34 C.F.R. § 76.730, including financial records related to use of grant funds, separately from other grant funds, including funds an LEA receives under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA Act). The LEA 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 (i) USED and/or its Inspector General; or (ii) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.

Other Assurances and Certifications

YES

- ✓ Other 1) The LEA will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- ✓ Other 2) With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the SEA will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the SEA will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- ✓ Other 3) To the extent applicable, the LEA will include in its local application a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program

beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede equal access to, or participation in, the program.

- ✓ Other 4) The LEA will comply with all applicable requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (sometimes referred to as the Uniform Guidance, or the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG)).
- ✓ Other 5) The LEA will comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations and assurances; the following provisions of Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

GEPA Assurances

YES

- ✓ GEPA 1) The LEA will administer each program covered by the application in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications, including, but not limited to federal education program laws, the General Education Provisions Act, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, and the Uniform Grant Guidance.
- ✓ GEPA 2) Control of funds provided to the LEA, and title to property acquired with those funds, will be in a public agency and that a public agency will administer those funds and property.
- ✓ GEPA 3) The local educational agency will use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds.
- ✓ GEPA 4) The LEA will make reports to the Department and to USED as may reasonably be necessary to enable the Department and USED to perform their duties and that LEA will maintain such records, including the records required under 20 U.S.C. 1232f, and provide access to those records, as the Department or USED deem necessary to perform their duties.
- ✓ GEPA 5) The LEA will provide reasonable opportunities for the participation by teachers, parents, and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals in the planning for and operation of USED programs.
- ✓ GEPA 6) Any application, evaluation, periodic program plan or report relating to an USED program will be made readily available to parents and other members of the general public.
- ✓ GEPA 7) In the case of any project involving construction—
 - the project is not inconsistent with overall State plans for the construction of school facilities, and
 - In developing plans for construction, due consideration will be given to excellence of architecture and design and to compliance with standards prescribed by the Secretary of Education under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to ensure that facilities constructed with the use of Federal funds are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
- ✓ GEPA 8) The LEA has adopted effective procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers and administrators participating in an USED program significant information from educational research, demonstrations, and similar projects, and for adopting, where appropriate, promising educational practices developed through such projects.
- ✓ GEPA 9) None of the funds expended will be used to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests of the purchasing entity or its employees or any affiliate of such an organization.

Part II Application Requirements

- 1) How did the district leadership team consult with the stakeholder groups listed in assurance 5 during the development of the district's ESSER III Plan? (Check all that apply)
 - ☒ Public meetings
 - ☒ Focus groups
 - ☐ Surveys
 - ☐ Other
- 2) How did the district leadership team determine the district students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs? (Check all that apply)
 - ☒ ISASP data
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - students
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - parents
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - staff
 - ☒ Literacy screening and progress monitoring data
 - ☒ Math screening and progress monitoring data
 - ☒ Behavior referral data
 - ☐ Other
- 3) Which groups of students have been most impacted by COVID-19 in your district? (Check all that apply)
 - ☒ Students from low-income families
 - ☒ Students of color or from a particular ethnic group
 - ☒ English learners
 - ☒ Students with disabilities
 - ☒ Students experiencing homelessness
 - ☒ Children and youth in foster care
 - ☒ Migrant students
 - ☐ Other
- 4) How did the district leadership team determine the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of the students most impacted by COVID-19?
 - ☒ ISASP data by subgroup
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - students by subgroup
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - parents by subgroup
 - ☒ Conditions for Learning Survey results - staff by subgroup
 - ☒ Literacy screening and progress monitoring data by subgroup
 - ☒ Math screening and progress monitoring data by subgroup
 - ☒ Behavior referral data by subgroup
 - ☐ Other
- 5) Will the district use ESSER III funds to implement prevention and mitigation strategies related to COVID-19?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- 6) How does the district plan to use the 20% set-aside to address the academic impact of learning loss or to accelerate learning through evidence-based interventions? (Check all that apply)
 - ☒ Use of evidence-based accelerated learning interventions in literacy
 - ☒ Use of evidence-based accelerated learning interventions in mathematics
 - ☒ Use of evidence-based accelerated learning interventions in social-emotional-behavioral health (SEBH), including mental health
 - ☐ Attendance at/membership in the Leadership Academy established by the Department to help districts and schools implement evidence-based practices

- ☐ Attendance at/membership in the Accelerated Learning Academy established by the Department to help districts and schools implement evidence-based practices
 - ☐ Attendance at/membership in the Social-Emotional-Behavioral Health (SEBH) Academy established by the Department to help districts and schools implement evidence-based practices
 - ☒ Participation in the FAST for Success Literacy Exploratory Project
 - ☐ Other
- 7) How does the district plan to use the remaining ESSER III funds consistent with statutory requirements?
(Check all that apply)
- ☒ Activities authorized by the ESEA
 - ☒ Activities authorized by the the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - ☒ Activities authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
 - ☒ Activities authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins CTE)
 - ☒ Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on reopening and operating schools to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff
 - ☒ Coordinating preparedness and response efforts with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19
 - ☒ Training and professional development on sanitizing and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases
 - ☒ Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the LEA's facilities
 - ☒ Repairing and improving school facilities to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazard
 - ☒ Improving indoor air quality
 - ☒ Addressing the needs of children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth
 - ☒ Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs
 - ☒ Planning for or implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students and providing technology for online learning Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, connectivity, assistive technology, and adaptive equipment) for students that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including students from low-income families and children with disabilities
 - ☒ Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence-based full-service community schools and the hiring of counselors
 - ☒ Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs
 - ☒ Addressing learning loss
 - ☐ Other
- 8) Please indicate the extent to which the district has board adopted policies for each of the following health and safety strategies by providing a link to the policy posted on the district's website:
If no policy exists, leave the field blank

Policy	URL Link to Policy
Physical distancing e.g., use of cohorts/podding	
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	
Diagnostic and screening testing	
Efforts to provide vaccinations to eligible educators, other staff, and students	

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies	
--	--

- 9) The local education agency (LEA) assures that the district's ESSER III Plan will be posted to the district's website and that this plan will be orally translated to parents unable to understand the plan as written; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.
- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No