

**State Plan for the
American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**



U.S. Department of Education

Issued: April 21, 2021

OMB Number: 1810-0754
Expiration Date: October 31, 2021

Paperwork Burden Statement According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0754. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 100 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit under Section 2001 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP Act). If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this individual collection, or if you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form, application or survey, please contact Britt Jung, Office of State and Grantee Relations, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-6450, email: SGR@ed.gov directly.

Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (“ARP ESSER”) Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) Act of 2021, provides nearly \$122 billion to States to support the Nation’s schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. It is particularly important that ARP ESSER funding will enable States and local educational agencies (“LEAs”), and more directly schools, to support students who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to have suffered the most because of longstanding inequities in our communities and schools that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education (“Department”) is committed to working in partnership with States so that these unprecedented resources are quickly put to work to ensure students have sustained access to in-person instruction and that the resources are used to provide the effective support students need as they persist through and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The thoughtful and timely use of these funds will have a lasting impact on our Nation’s schools and help to address the inequities in resources, services, and opportunities available to our students.

This template presents an opportunity for States to share their plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds with the public. The Department must approve a State educational agency’s (“SEA’s”) plan in order to make the State’s remaining ARP ESSER allocation available for use. Please note that the Department intends to issue ARP ESSER reporting requirements separately.

Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below. An SEA may use this template or another format as long as every item and element is addressed in the SEA’s response. Throughout this document, questions that refer to an SEA’s ARP ESSER funding are referencing the total allocation to be received by the SEA, including that which it allocates to its LEAs.

Each SEA must submit to the Department by **June 7, 2021**, either: (1) its ARP ESSER plan or (2) the State requirements that preclude submission of the plan by that date and a date by which it will be able to submit its complete ARP ESSER plan.

To submit the SEA’s plan, please email the plan to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov).

In order to ensure transparency, the Department will post each plan on the Department’s website when it is received and will indicate each plan’s approval status.

This template also allows States to fulfill the requirement of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (“CRRSA”) Act ESSER II 6-month reporting requirement in section 313(f) of the CRRSA Act.

Cover Page

Grantee and Contact Information

ARP ESSER PR Award Number (e.g., S425U2100XX):

SEA Contact: Ana Riley, Deputy Commissioner for Instructional Programs

Telephone: 401-222-8700

Email address: Ana.Riley@ride.ri.gov

By signing this document, I agree to each of the assurances listed in Appendix C and further assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.	
Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative Angélica Infante-Green	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative 	Date: June 7, 2021

A. Describing the State’s Current Status and Needs

The Department recognizes the extraordinary efforts made by States, LEAs, and educators to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe the progress they have made, the priorities and student needs guiding their ARP ESSER funding decisions, and their current and projected operating status.

1. Progress and Promising Practices: Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 strategies that have been most effective in supporting the needs of students in your State during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include, if applicable, how your State will submit and encourage its LEAs to submit lessons learned and best practices to the Department’s [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) so that they can be shared with other States and LEAs.

Rhode Island was one of only a select few states that reopened schools at full capacity based on CDC guidance. This was achieved through continued collaboration, robust testing, layered mitigation, and flexibility from school leaders, teachers, students, and families. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) employed the following strategies:

Communication and Coordination

Every district worked with a designated RIDE point of contact through a “pod” structure for technical assistance and support. The point of contact helped troubleshoot any number of obstacles related to instruction, facilities, transportation, PPE, and social-emotional supports, among others. RIDE, in collaboration with a local nonprofit set up a help desk “hotline” so that there was a centralized way for teachers, students, and families to receive tech support.

Addressing Inequity

To address the barriers to Wi-Fi coverage and access to the internet—especially in low-income communities—RIDE worked to secure student laptops, free Wi-Fi hotspots, and cell phone service from the four most common providers in the state.

Foreseeing inevitable need for acceleration due to lost instruction time, Rhode Island public schools had the opportunity to expand upon teaching and learning for their students through face-to-face summer camps and the Summer Academy for Interactive Learning (SAIL) program in Summer 2020. Both urban and suburban students collectively participated. Students participated in creating many of the offerings. The Rhode Island Department of Education provided statewide summer programming for over 14,000 Rhode Island students with access to a range of academic and enrichment opportunities along with project-based learning and student-led seminars.

Robust Testing & Layered Mitigation

To support in-person learning, RIDE released [Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) in June 2020. This provided guidance on the requirements that school systems would use to plan for reopening in Fall 2020. The document outlined four reopening scenarios (full in-person

for all, partial in-person, limited in-person, and full distance learning), guidance on class and group size limits, and cleanliness protocols. The state recognized that testing and contact tracing would be critical in reopening schools in-person safely and announced the creation of the Education Operations Center (EdOC). The center was staffed by RIDE, RIDOH, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, and the Rhode Island National Guard to deploy to schools during an outbreak as well as to support rapid testing and contact tracing.

2. **Overall Priorities:** Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 issues currently facing students and schools across your State as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including, to the extent possible, data illustrating why these are the most critical and/or most widespread issues facing schools and students.

Enrollment / Attendance¹

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RIDE data show that overall enrollment has decreased from the 2019-2020 school year to the 2020-2021 school year, with the early grades reflecting the greatest impact.

- For the 2020-2021 school year, enrollment in Rhode Island public schools has decreased by 3.1 percentage points, or about 4,000 students. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten have experienced the largest decrease in enrollment (26 percent and 9 percent, respectively). Enrollment in most other grades decreased by 3 to 4 percent, with the exception of slight increases in enrollment in grades 11 and 12. With federal and state funding tied to student enrollment, district budgets are adversely affected by decreases in enrollment.²

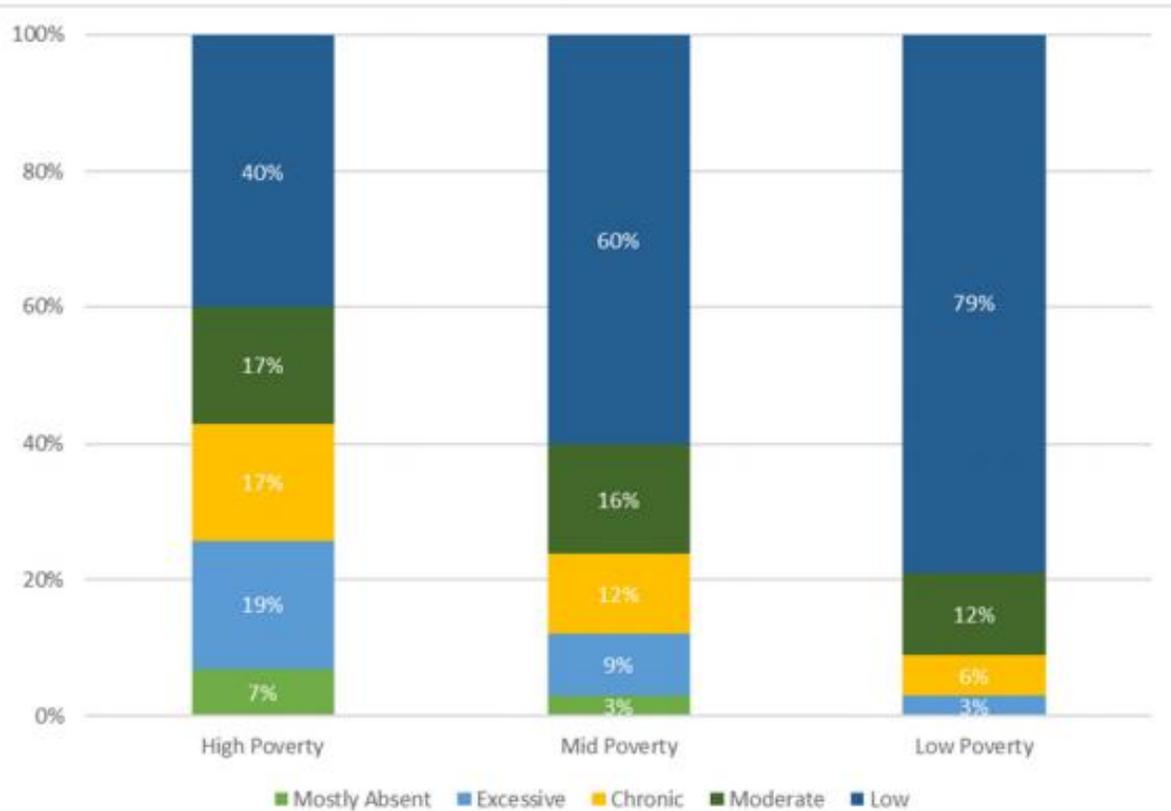
Absences have increased by almost 50 percent across Rhode Island schools, with greater concentration and greater percentages of chronic absenteeism in high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools.

- Along with the increase in total number of absences, the percentage of students who are chronically, excessively, or mostly absent (see Figure 1) has also increased from 19 to 26 percent from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021. Schools with the highest poverty levels show the highest proportion of chronically absent students. Across the board, students of color, multilingual learners, and differently-abled students were more chronically absent compared to their peers, especially when they were enrolled in high-poverty schools, as these communities have been the most impacted by the pandemic.

¹ Enrollment and attendance data generated by RIDE represent a snapshot from the data available on February 11, 2021.

² Lee, V., Gutierrez, E., & Blagg, K. (2020, October 6). Declining School Enrollment Spells Trouble for Education Funding. The Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/declining-school-enrollmentspells-trouble-education-funding>

Figure 1.



ABSENCE RATE CATEGORIES:
Low: absent fewer than 5 percent of schooldays
Moderate: absent between 5 percent and 10 percent of schooldays
Chronic: absent between 10 percent and 20 percent of schooldays
Excessive: absent between 20 percent and 50 percent of schooldays
Mostly absent: absent more than 50 percent of schooldays

Academic Achievement

RIDE used ESSER I funds to purchase statewide interim assessments in order to have data on student achievement. Academic achievement during the pandemic has been lower than what is typically expected. Figure 2 shows that students’ reading performance was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with higher percentages of students performing one or more grade levels below in the 2020-2021 school year compared to the previous school year. Students’ math performance was similarly affected, as shown in Figure 3. Across kindergarten through grade eight in a sample of 14 LEAs, higher percentages of students of color, differently-abled students, multilingual learners, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were behind in reading and math compared to their white peers. The existing performance gaps for these populations— which were already significant— have grown larger during the pandemic.

Figure 2.³

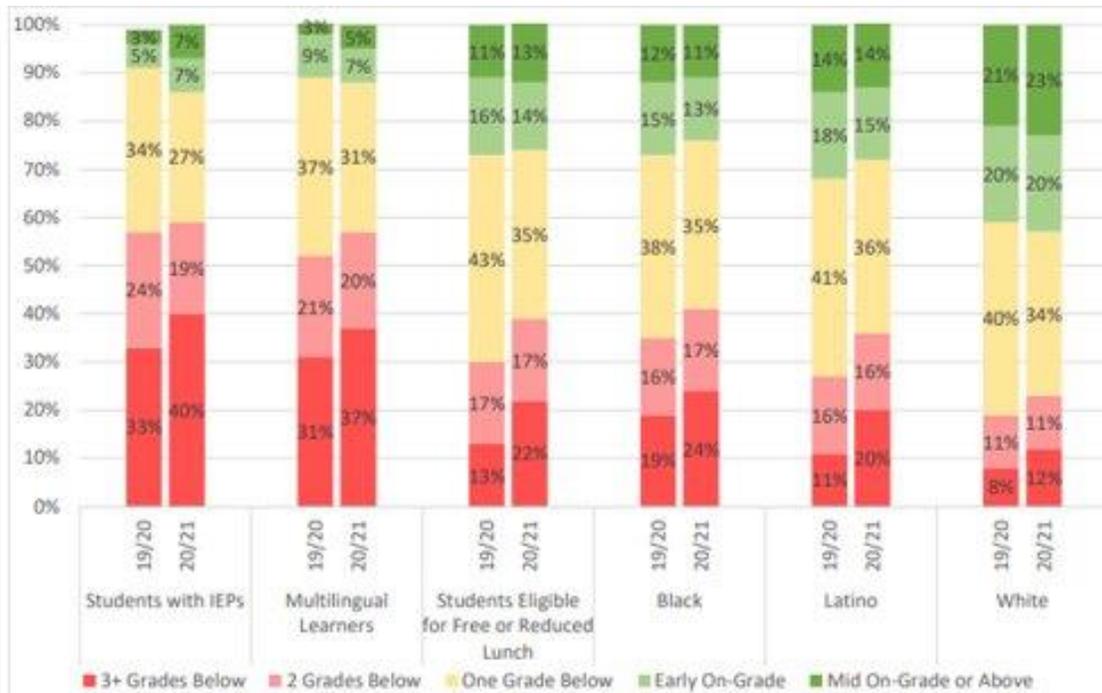
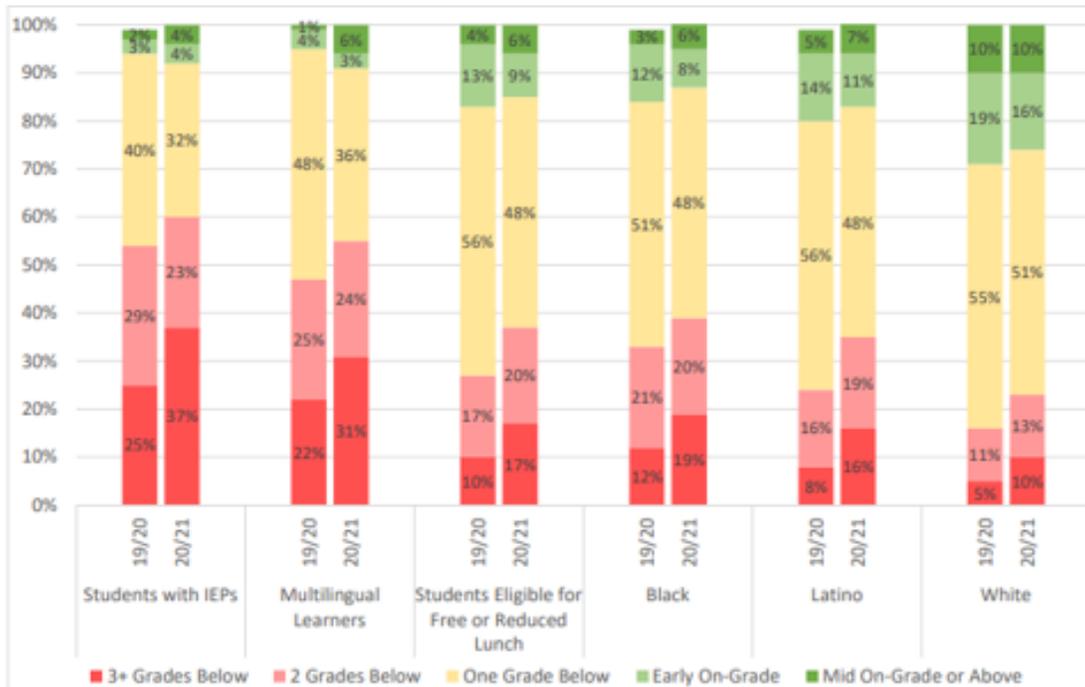


Figure 3.⁴



³ Data is based on assessments delivered in the fall of each school year and is aggregated for grades kindergarten through eight.

⁴ Data is based on assessments delivered in the fall of each school year and is aggregated for grades kindergarten through eight.

3. Identifying Needs of Underserved Students: Describe your State’s 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:
- i. Students from low-income families,
 - ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),
 - iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),
 - iv. English learners,
 - v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)),
 - vi. Students experiencing homelessness,
 - vii. Children and youth in foster care,
 - viii. Migratory students, and
 - ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).

To the extent possible, this description should include data on indicators such as estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time,⁵ chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

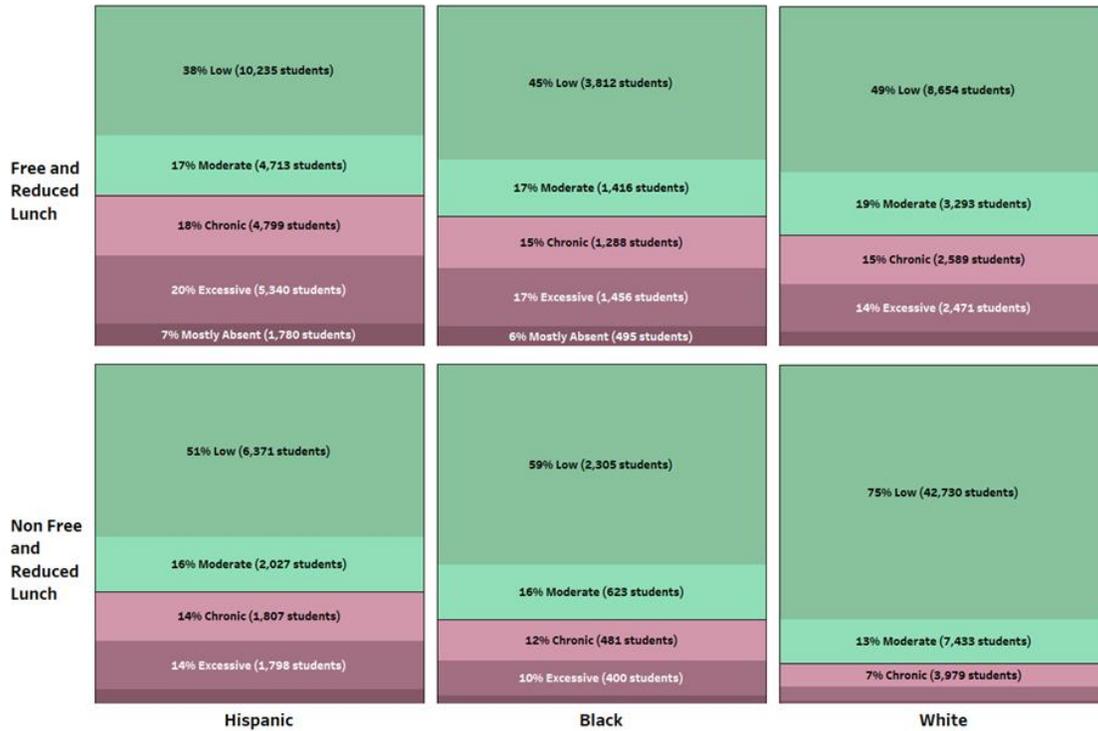
RIDE maintains that enrollment/attendance and academic achievement are the two most pressing issues facing all Rhode Island students. As described in A.2 above, Rhode Island has seen that different student groups have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic on these metrics alone.

- *Students from low-income families*: Across kindergarten through grade eight in a sample of 14 LEAs, higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were behind in reading and math. Schools with the highest poverty levels show the highest proportion of chronically absent students.
- *Students from underserved racial/ethnic groups*: Across kindergarten through grade eight in a sample of 14 LEAs, higher percentages of Black and Latino students were behind in reading and math compared to their white peers. Across the board, students of color were more chronically absent compared to their peers (Figure 4).

⁵ For the purposes of the plan, “academic impact of lost instructional time” refers to “learning loss” experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as referenced in the ARP Act and the CRRSA Act.

Figure 4.

2020-21 Absence Rate Categories by Race/Ethnicity and FRPL Status



- *Students by gender:* RIDE has not yet observed significant disparities in attendance and achievement by gender, and will revisit this with regards to summative state assessment results. However, state culture and climate survey data show that in 2020-2021, transgender students in middle and high school have felt less engaged, less supported social-emotionally, and less positive about school climate compared to their cisgender peers.
- *English Learners:* In addition to addressing chronic absence and low student achievement, RIDE recognizes that more considerations must be given to support English Learners, including:
 - Intentional Grouping of Multilingual Learners – strategically group students in both heterogeneous and homogenous groups, based on needs.
 - Learning Time for Students and Educators – provide professional learning time for educators and enrichment opportunities for students.
 - Expanding Dual Language Programs – prioritize expanding, scaling, and growing dual language programs in each LEA for multilingual learners.
- *Children with Disabilities:* Universal screening will be necessary for all students, and will be particularly important for differently-abled students. For those differently-abled students identified as needing additional support, LEAs must prioritize targeted, intensive intervention that is research-based and supported with routine progress monitoring.
- *Students Experiencing Homelessness:* In addition to addressing chronic absence and low achievement, RIDE as the SEA will expand funds to increase the number of eligible LEAs that receive support for direct services to students experiencing homelessness.

RIDE is committed to taking action to support the above student groups, including students in foster care and migratory youth by addressing the most pressing needs resulting from chronic absenteeism and lost instructional time. RIDE aims to:

- Energize school communities through the launch of a statewide back-to-school campaign, with particular attention to students who are chronically absent and overaged-under credited.
 - Launch a targeted whole-of-state campaign and communications toolkit in multiple languages to reengage our school communities about returning to school safely.
 - Reengage and empower chronically absent youth and youth who are overaged-under credited, as well as the students who have fallen out of our state systems.
 - Highlight the importance of participating in summer programming and extended learning offerings, including before and after school, and out-of-school opportunities.
 - Elevate the power of coming together for common, shared experiences on social-emotional wellness.
 - Explicitly use summer programming as an opportunity to uplift youth voice and reengage youth and their families in the schooling experience.
- Ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction as well as personalized support from adults, through extended learning, partnerships for before and after school, and summer learning opportunities that are undergirded by high-quality materials and resources.
 - Commit to every child and every family having access to at least one high-quality extended learning opportunity this summer.
 - Ensure that every urban student, multilingual learner, and differently-abled student in Rhode Island is enrolled and engaged in quality summer learning opportunities that, ideally, are designed specifically to serve them and their specific needs.
 - Recruit and expand staff to provide in-school and expanded learning opportunities, with a focus on activating adults within local communities.
 - In planning for any expanded learning programming, prioritize student centered design and the values of voice and choice, flexibility, and access.
 - Forge intentional partnerships between LEAs and community-based organizations (CBOs), recognizing their respective strengths, sharing unique expertise, and collaborating to ensure more fluid data sharing and seamless post-summer transitions.
- Universally screen all students and align resources to need.
 - In the coming year, universally screen all students both academically and social-emotionally, and target resources based on need and urgency.
 - Plan and allocate resources with a clear and focused priority for supports and staffing related to every urban student, multilingual learner, and differently-abled student.
 - Root all solutions in high-quality instructional materials, professional learning for educators, and positive, productive relationships with students.
 - Center all actions from an orientation of cultural responsiveness and antiracism that promotes SEL and wellness.
 - Focus on building and sustaining adult capacity to work in teams to support students holistically through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) lens.

4. Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and student well-being, including identifying the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic. Where possible, please identify the data sources the SEA will suggest its LEAs use in thoughtfully diagnosing areas of need, including data on the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of lost instructional time.

In the immediate, RIDE will continue a point of contact structure to support LEAs' development of applications for COVID-19 relief funds, including using all data sources available to identify the impact of the pandemic on student learning and student well-being. LEAs should consider disaggregated data along student groups (multilingual learners, differently-abled students, FRPL, McKinney-Vento, students of color, and other descriptive statistics), using data sources including, but not limited to:

- Interim assessments
- SurveyWorks administration (Rhode Island's statewide school culture and climate survey)
- Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) ELA and Math for Grades 3-8
- PSAT10 (Grade 10)
- SAT (Grade 11)
- ACCESS 2.0 for English Language Learners
- Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment – ELA and Math for Grades 3-8 and 11; Science for Grades 5, 8, 11
- Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA)
- Universal screeners for both academic and social-emotional needs

Also, LEAs are expected to disaggregate their attendance and enrollment data to unearth patterns not readily discernable and think about needs across the student learning experiences during SY19-20 and SY20-21, be it full in-person, hybrid, or distance modes of instruction.

RIDE will encourage LEAs to also use any locally administered assessments and internal qualitative data collections to gauge students' academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs due to lost instructional time. RIDE has made a formal request to waive accountability this year. Therefore, data stories and data visualization created at the SEA-level will be paramount, and RIDE's points of contact will work intentionally with LEAs to understand the nuanced assessment data from the 2020-2021 school year. Thus far, Rhode Island has had a 90% participation rate for students assessed using RICAS. RIDE also employs DataCenter dashboards that enhance SEA ability and capacity to consistently support the field. RIDE commits to providing technical support and training for LEAs to better report data to the SEA, and use the data available to them.

5. School Operating Status: It is essential to have data on how students are learning in order to support the goals of access and equity, especially for student groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Describe the current status of data collection on operational status and mode of instruction of all schools in your State. This description must include:

- i. A description of to what extent, and how frequently, the State collects now and will collect in the future data for all schools in your State on:
 - a. Mode of instruction: The number of schools in your State that are offering fully remote or online-only instruction; both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid model); and/or full-time in-person instruction;

As of September 2020, RIDE has regularly collected data indicating whether schools and LEAs were fully remote, hybrid, or fully in-person. For SY2021-22, RIDE will continue to collect mode of instruction data for students reported with a date range for each mode: remote, hybrid, or in-person, e.g. “Student John Doe – 100% in person from 9/1/2021 to 12/01/2021.”

- b. Enrollment: Student enrollment for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction; and

RIDE collects student enrollment daily. It is reported out at regular intervals during the year and snapshots of data disaggregated by student group or by mode of instruction are generated as needed.

- c. Attendance: Student attendance for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction.

At the student level, daily attendance data is collected. For SY2021-22, RIDE will continue to collect daily attendance data, but mode of instruction will be reported with a date range for each mode: remote, hybrid, or in-person, e.g. “Student John Doe – 100% in person from 9/1/2021 to 12/01/2021.”

- ii. The data described in A.5.i.a. and b. using the template in Appendix A (and to the extent available, tdata described in A.5.i.c.) for the most recent time period available. Please note that this data can be submitted separately within 14 calendar days after a State submits this plan. The SEA must also make this data publicly available on its website as soon as possible but no later than June 21, 2021, and regularly provide updated available information on its website. The Department will periodically review data listed in A.5.i on SEA websites.

For data described in A.5.i.a., see Appendix A Tables 1a-f. For data described in A.5.i.b, see Appendix A Table 2. For data described in A.5.i.c, please visit RIDE’s public [attendance dashboard](#).

- iii. To the extent available, a description of the planned operational status and mode of instruction for the State and its LEAs for Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.

All LEAs will be expected to provide full in-person learning for all students during Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year. Distance learning options may be made available by LEAs for students who have underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19.

B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

The Department recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining their safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, and especially for being able to address the educational inequities that have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in this vital area.

1. **Support for LEAs:** Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in safely returning to in-person instruction and sustaining the safe operation of schools. This description must include:
 - i. How the SEA will support its LEAs implementing, to the greatest extent practicable, prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff;

Complete the table below, adding rows as necessary, or provide a narrative description.

LEAs in Rhode Island have been open for full in-person learning as early as September 2020. As a result, a significant amount of the supports listed below began during Summer 2020 as LEAs prepared to open and continued to remain open throughout the school year. During Summer 2020, RIDE and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) created a comprehensive guidebook and reopening framework to assist LEAs with planning. Additionally, 100% of LEAs submitted reopening plans for multiple scenarios over the summer and the SEA provided feedback on every plan. In addition, RIDE and RIDOH also reviewed over 50 private school plans.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the SEA partnered with RIDOH to provide bi-weekly “Pod Meetings” so all LEAs could learn of updated or new guidance, engage in question-and-answer sessions, and learn from one another. An Education Operations Center (EdOC) was established to provide 24/7 support for LEAs’ health and safety efforts.

Since all Rhode Island LEAs are currently open for at least hybrid instruction and most are open for full in-person learning already, the state anticipates LEAs will need lower levels of health- and safety-specific support during this summer and next school year.

Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	For the 2020-21 school year, masks were required for K-12 settings. Mask guidance continues to be updated and shared with LEAs. The SEA created a master price agreement and roster of suppliers for LEAs to use when purchasing PPE and worked with local emergency management agency to distribute multiple rounds of adult and student masks to all LEAs.
Physical distancing	Written guidance created and shared with LEAs. Updated as CDC guidelines have been revised. (Last Updated 6/2/21)
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Written guidance created and shared with LEAs. Updated as CDC guidelines have been revised. (Last Updated 6/2/21)
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	Written guidance created and shared with LEAs, available here . Updated as CDC guidelines have been revised. During Summer 2020, building walkthroughs were conducted in every public school using a common checklist. Ventilation specific guidance was published 10/2020. SEA co-hosted technical assistance sessions with ventilation experts and RIDOH doctors to support SEAs in maintaining healthy facilities. In November 2020, EdOC worked directly with LEAs to procure and distribute state-purchased portable air filtration units for any classroom in the state that required them.
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	Ongoing weekly collaboration between EdOC, SEA, and RIDOH’s designated K-12 case investigation and contact tracing team. Each LEA assigned to a regional pod with a designated staff from RIDOH and the EdOC to assist with contact tracing. Schools empowered to conduct their own contact tracing using state templates and resources, allowing RIDOH to confirm contact tracing list and make quarantine decisions.
Diagnostic and screening testing	Thirteen PK-12 testing sites established to provide easy statewide access to testing and results. In January of 2021, all LEAs were provided with training and resources to conduct their own asymptomatic testing programs. Additionally, the EdOC and RIDOH provided mobile testing events at schools as requested. Written guidance created and shared with LEAs. Updated as CDC guidelines have been revised. (Last updated 4/4/21)
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	SEA worked directly with RIDOH and local municipalities to establish vaccine clinics for all educational staff and eligible students. Student vaccine clinics were held within schools.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	In August 2020, SEA published written guidance on reopening and supporting differently-abled students . Technical assistance sessions were conducted during Summer 2020 and throughout the school year for staff planning for and working with this population. The state will support LEAs with technical assistance questions beyond the 2020-2021 school year with the expectation that the requirements of Section 504 and IDEA for the provision of reasonable accommodations will be fulfilled.

- ii. Any Statewide plans, policies, estimated timelines, and specific milestones related to reopening and operation of school facilities, including any mechanisms the SEA will use to track, monitor, or enforce their implementation;

LEAs in Rhode Island have been open for full in-person learning as early as September 2020. As a result, a significant amount of the supports listed in Table B1 began during Summer 2020 as LEAs prepared to open and continued throughout the school year.

During Summer 2020, RIDE and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) created a comprehensive guidebook and reopening framework to assist LEAs with planning. Additionally, 100% of LEAs submitted reopening plans for multiple scenarios over the summer and the SEA provided feedback on every plan.

All LEAs will be expected to provide full in-person learning for all students during Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.

- iii. To what extent the SEA and its LEAs consult with Federal, State, and local health officials. This description should include, if available, whether the SEA and its LEAs have received support for screening testing from their State or local health department based on funding awarded by the CDC; and

RIDOH was awarded the ELC grant for approximately \$30M; the primary focus of this grant is screening testing. RIDE and the EdOC are on the design and planning team for implementation in Summer 2021 through the 2021-2022 school year.

- iv. Any guidance, professional learning, and technical assistance opportunities the SEA will make available to its LEAs.

Since all of Rhode Island's LEAs are currently open for at least hybrid instruction and most are open for full in-person learning already, RIDE anticipates LEAs will need lower levels of health- and safety- specific support during this summer and next school year. RIDE will continue to revise written guidance in accordance with updated CDC guidelines.

2. **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans:** Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/> (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on

the LEA’s website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:

- i. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;
- ii. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students’ academic needs, and students’ and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;
- iii. How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),⁶ and revises as appropriate, its plan, and how the SEA will ensure that the LEA seeks public input, and takes such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the revisions to the plan; and
- iv. Describe, to the extent the SEA collects it, information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs’ needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

RIDE will require each LEA to submit a Reopening Plan (hereafter referred to as a Back-to-School Plan) for full in-person learning for all their grade spans. The plans will include each of the elements outlined in table B1 (i), as well as how they will meet the comprehensive needs of their students and staff (ii).

RIDE’s role is to ensure that all LEAs are prepared to provide students, staff, and families with a safe educational experience for the coming school year and to provide key resources to LEAs in support of that process. RIDE will be updating guidance resources to support LEAs in developing key components of their Back-to-School Plans. LEAs were required to submit Reopening Plans for the 2020-2021 school year addressing Health and Safety, Instruction, Social Emotional and Mental Health Support, Operations, and Communication. They are accustomed to this process and have already had a year to implement all the elements in table B1. Moving forward, LEAs will be expected to iterate on these plans based on the most up-to-date CDC guidance, as well as the specific needs of their students, staff, and broader school community (ii, iv).

RIDE will support LEAs by reviewing and providing feedback on plans and opportunities for technical assistance. The Back-to-School Plans will be a required submission component for LEA applications for

⁶ ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1225(b), and are therefore available to SEAs and LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions of these plans, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.

ARP/ESSER III Funds. In addition to public posting, these applications will require that Back-to-School Plans be subject to review and possible revision every six months during the grant period (iii).

C. Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds

The Department recognizes that seeking input from diverse stakeholders is essential to developing plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds that are responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators. In this section, SEAs will describe their plans for consultation and for coordinating the use of ARP ESSER funds with other resources to meet the needs of students.

1. **SEA Consultation:** Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
 - i. students;
 - ii. families;
 - iii. Tribes (if applicable);
 - iv. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
 - v. school and district administrators (including special education administrators);
 - vi. superintendents;
 - vii. charter school leaders (if applicable);
 - viii. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
 - ix. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must include how the SEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the SEA took such input into account.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RIDE launched the Learning, Equity & Accelerated Pathways (LEAP) Task Force, a diverse committee of 36 parents, state and local leaders, education experts, and community members who, over two months, engaged in an evidence-based process relying on data and the knowledge of national education experts. Commissioner Infante-Green chaired the LEAP Task Force with co-chairs Ana Riley, Deputy Commissioner of Instructional Programs, and James Erinakes, 2021 Rhode Island Superintendent of the Year from Exeter-West Greenwich. This inclusive process also included critical voices from the Rhode Island Student Advisory Council and the Rhode Island Educators of Color Committee; both served as sounding boards and provided feedback. All task force meetings were open to the public and recorded for future viewing.

From knowledge about the latest research and data from national experts; to the lived experience and needs of the community through parents, students, and CBOs; to the challenges of implementation at the school and district level with superintendents, principals, and teachers; every voice was critical. The recommendations generated by the 36-member task force reinforced the importance of accelerating

learning, supporting students, and setting the strategic direction of the educational pathways work in Rhode Island.

The LEAP Task Force’s work falls into five categories. First, the task force identified systemic enabling conditions, or foundational conditions that must occur to support sustainable change. Then, within the context of those enabling conditions, the task force identified five absolute priorities, or clear commitments to change.

1. Energize our school communities—students and educators—by launching a statewide back-to-school campaign, with particular attention to the chronically absent and the overaged-under credited students.
2. Ensure all students have access to high-quality and personalized support from adults through extended learning, before/after school partnerships, and summer learning opportunities.
3. Universally screen all students and align resources to need.
4. Improve and support student transitions across grades and systems.
5. Close the digital divide.

In addition, the task force identified specific recommendations related to meeting diverse needs, serving multilingual learners and differently-abled students, and addressing social-emotional wellness. Additionally, recommendations were included for expanded learning programs, including summer and after-school programs, tutoring, mentoring, and small group support.

To support role differentiation across the entire system, governance recommendations were also provided for RIDE, its constituent LEAs, and partner organizations, like CBOs.

Finally, RIDE worked to support the LEAP Task Force by drafting a framework for acceleration in Rhode Island, as well as producing fiscal guidance for the field related to the strategic usage of stimulus resources from the federal government— ESSER II/CRRSAA and ESSER III/ARP— aligned to the LEAP recommendations.

2. Coordinating Funds: Describe to what extent the SEA has and will coordinate Federal COVID-19 pandemic funding and other Federal funding. This description must include:
 - i. How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups (including students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);

Complete the table below or provide a narrative description.

Table C1.

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
ESSER I (CARES Act)	<p>For ESSER I Funds, RIDE has obligated and/or expended all but \$131.00 of the \$46,350,444.00 total award. \$34,827,267.00 has been expended to date with a balance of \$11,523,046.00 obligated in awards to LEAs in the state.</p> <p>The SEA has either spent or granted the ESSER I funds reserved via the state set-aside for the following current priorities—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer learning programs • Subgrants to the LEAs hardest-hit by COVID-19 <p>Rhode Island’s LEAs have spent approximately half of the ESSER I funds granted to them for the following current priorities—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protective equipment • Other protective measures such as partitions and plastic for in-person schooling • Building cleaning (staff and supplies) • HVAC improvements • Increased transportation costs due to in-person learning • Increased technology costs, including equipment, wifi access, and curricular resources, due to distance learning • Increased substitute staffing costs due to staff being out ill or due to quarantine
	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
GEER I (CARES Act)	<p>GEER I funds have been obligated for the following items—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PreK Expansion (\$1M) • HigherEd - Childcare Pathways (\$1.2M) • Rhode Island Promise Expansion (\$3,783,000) • Mental Health Supports – Student Assistance Counselors (\$884,700) • Providence Support (\$1M)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woonsocket Higher Education Center Support (\$336,549) • Rhode Island College Support (\$500,000)
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	<p>For the ESSER II Funds, RIDE has allocated the 90% (\$166,016,982.00) of the total award to the LEAs in the state except for a reserve of \$1,204,569 for new and expanding charter schools. Of the 9.5% (\$17,555,199.00) state set-aside funds, the balance of set aside funds are either in the planning phase or awaiting approval from the state’s governance board.</p> <p>The SEA plans to use ESSER II funds reserved via the state set aside for the following planned priorities—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening core instruction • Personalizing student supports • Community engagement and outreach • Kindergarten ramp up • Supporting low-performing districts <p>The LEAs in the state are currently completing the ESSER II application with the application due back to the state by July 1, 2021. Rhode Island’s LEAs plan to spend ESSER II funds granted to them for the following planned priorities—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenditures to improve indoor air quality, including window replacement and HVAC repair or replacement • Extended learning time, including summer as well as before/after school • Technology for in-person and distance learning • High quality instructional materials and associated professional learning • Social-emotional needs of students and faculty
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	<p>GEER II funds have been obligated for the following items—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PreK Expansion (\$1M) • Higher Ed - Childcare Pathways (\$1.2M) • Rhode Island Promise Expansion (\$1,470,204) • Woonsocket Higher Education Center Support (\$134,335)

- ii. To what extent ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been awarded to LEAs and, if funds have not yet been made available to LEAs, when they will be. In addition, please provide any available information on the total dollar amounts of ESSER I and ESSER II funds that have been obligated but not expended by the SEA and its LEAs, including whether the SEA is able to track LEA obligations.

For the ESSER I Funds, RIDE has obligated and or expended all but \$131.00 of the \$46,350,444.00 total award. \$34,827,267.00 has been expended to date with a balance of \$11,523,046.00 obligated in awards to the LEAs in the state. RIDE is unable to track the current amount of obligations at the LEA level.

For the ESSER II Funds, RIDE has allocated the 90% (\$166,016,982.00) of the total award to the LEAs in the state except for a reserve of \$1,204,569 for new and expanding charter schools. The LEAs in the state are currently completing the ESSER II application with the application due back to the state by July 1, 2021. Of the 9.5% (\$17,555,199.00) state set-aside funds, \$3,000,000 has been obligated for the All-Course Network. The balance of set aside funds are either in the planning phase or awaiting approval from the state's governance board.

At the time of this submission, no ESSER II dollars have been obligated or expended by LEAs. The draft application questions for the ESSER II subgrant application were shared with LEAs to support their planning and budgeting processes in mid-March, and the ESSER II subgrant application opened within RIDE's Accelegrants system in mid-May; at the time of transmittal of this document, RIDE has received no application submissions from LEAs.

- iii. In supporting LEAs as they plan for the safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent to which the SEA is also using other Federal funding sources including but not limited to under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ("ESEA"), IDEA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act ("WIOA"), funding for child nutrition services, and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness provided by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act.⁷

RIDE will leverage the funding recently made available under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act to expand the number of eligible LEAs for receipt of McKinney-Vento Homeless Education grants. Prior to the infusion of additional funds, Rhode Island provided supplemental McKinney-Vento Homeless grants to eight school districts with the highest number of homeless students. With the

⁷ Please note that the needs of students experiencing homelessness must be addressed (along with the other groups disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) through the use of the ARP ESSER SEA reservations and the required LEA reservation for the academic impact of lost instructional time; the funding provided to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act is in addition to the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds.

additional funds, RIDE anticipates providing support for additional LEAs with the initial 25% of the anticipated federal funds.

RIDE anticipates receiving eight million dollars of additional IDEA Part B funds and ~\$800,000 of Early Childhood Special Education (Sec 619) funds. RIDE intends to target the maximum amount of funds for direct education services for students.

Finally, RIDE is working to communicate and strongly encourage all LEAs statewide to utilize this exceptional opportunity of additional federal stimulus funding to think deeply and creatively about blending, braiding, and strategically leveraging their Title allocations (Title I, II, III, IV-A, IDEA) administered through RIDE's Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) with the opportunities presented by ARP/ESSER III. RIDE program teams are ready and available to assist LEAs with questions and consideration of options as they think through new or innovative approaches to supporting students in a way that leverages this unique moment while being fiscally responsible.

D. Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students

The Department recognizes that States have an extraordinary opportunity to address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students through the ARP Act's required State set-asides to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, provide summer learning and enrichment programs, and provide comprehensive afterschool programs. In this section, SEAs will describe their evidence-based strategies for these resources.

1. Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 5 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) on evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:
 - i. A description of the evidence-based interventions (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those interventions on an ongoing basis to understand if they are working;

Strengthening Core Instruction – Math and Literacy

Rhode Island is committed to accelerating learning during the summer of 2021 and subsequent school year. Rhode Island experiences persistently low achievement in literacy and mathematics. COVID exacerbated this low performance. Guidance provided to districts outlining stimulus spending priorities emphasizes the need to invest in high-quality curriculum with specific implementation supports in ELA and mathematics. This guidance additionally calls on districts to take urgent action in addressing foundational literacy. Early literacy is a priority in Rhode Island as evidenced through state legislation

requiring educators to demonstrate proficiency or awareness, depending on role, in the science of reading.

Using stimulus funds, RIDE will launch a math strategy that will provide Eureka specific curriculum implementation supports in the elementary grades. Many districts in RHODE ISLAND have adopted Eureka math as part of RI's high-quality curriculum initiative. Often, districts are unable to provide ongoing implementation support that builds teacher content knowledge integrated with curriculum support. The modules and professional learning that will be developed and delivered will support the enhancement of teacher instruction in mathematics. At the middle level, RIDE will provide deep support in three to five LEAs that involves several days of professional learning beginning in the summer and continuing throughout the school year. Interim assessment data from the 2021 school year indicates math performance was more negatively impacted than ELA performance, which makes it imperative the RIDE focus its funding on a math strategy for both elementary and middle grades.

In addition to the curriculum-specific content focus in mathematics, RIDE will support the development of modules/online classes that support the awareness of the science of reading. Approximately 7,000 educators across RHODE ISLAND must demonstrate awareness. Another 5,000 educators must demonstrate proficiency in the science of reading. Stimulus funding will support over 2,000 educators in the completion of professional learning and demonstration of proficiency in the science of reading. RIDE will be able to monitor short term impact of all these initiatives by closely monitoring implementation and reviewing proficiency completion data. RIDE will continue to review interim assessment data for early improvement and review state assessment results.

Tutoring

Rhode Island will also launch an effort to expand high-dosage tutoring statewide. RIDE will build out technical assistance learning communities to support district leaders in developing tutoring programs for their districts. This technical assistance will focus on training district staff on research-backed best practices for high-dosage tutoring, modelled on a similar pilot program in the state launched by Brown University's Annenberg Institute this year. As part of this, RIDE will fund staff members to work directly with districts to help overcome implementation hurdles. RIDE will also help districts analyze their data to identify the student groups most in need of high-dosage tutoring to accelerate their learning. RIDE will also serve as convener to help coordinate several related tutoring initiatives in the state, such as an expansion of RI's AmeriCorps organizations and a partnership with Schoolhouse.world, Khan Academy's tutoring-focused sister organization, to help align efforts around a common vision for serving students.

- ii. How the evidence-based interventions will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to determine the impact of lost instructional time; and

District and school data will guide decisions for the interventions outlined in this plan. These data include: interim assessment data, prior and SY 21 achievement data, ACCESS data, attendance data and

other factors. RIDE disaggregates student data by student subgroups, which enables RIDE and districts to ensure that the interventions undertaken in this plan are having the desired impact on the subpopulations most impacted by COVID-19.

For 1- and 2-Star LEAs (LEAs identified as low performing through district accountability), they will be eligible for a strategic support matching grant through a portion of RIDE's state set-aside dollars, currently called the LEAP District Support Program. This match was conceived to provide additional support to our most historically under-resourced communities, as well as to incentivize LEAs to adopt high-leverage, evidence-based interventions from a comprehensive but not exhaustive list, and then to study the implementation and the effectiveness of those interventions using a continuous improvement model and rapid-cycle evaluation work. This work will all be supported and sustained through data-driven, district-improvement communities of practice that will be facilitated by a technical assistance partner who will also provide coaching and on-site support. A sampling of the broad categories of such aligned evidence-based interventions includes: high quality instructional materials, professional learning, multilingual learner (MLL) improvement strategies, differently-abled students (DAS) improvement strategies, social-emotional learning (SEL) or mental health supports, grade-span specific approaches, school or district redesign, or other targeted improvement approaches.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

RIDE will use a portion of its state set-aside to expand research and analysis capacity to understand the impact of COVID-19 more fully upon students. RIDE will work with leading research institutions in the state and region, such as the University of Rhode Island, Brown University, and Harvard University, to unearth and identify patterns in how COVID-19 impacted students, particularly student subpopulations, and look for replicable best practices. The goal of this research and evaluation approach will be to empower districts, schools, and the state with data-informed, evidence-based action steps for accelerating student learning.

2. Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs, including those that begin in Summer 2021, and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:
 - i. A description of the evidence-based programs that address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

RIDE will be significantly expanding summer learning options statewide through its All-Course Network (ACN) platform. The ACN provides free courses to students across the state, with courses developed and run by postsecondary institutions, community-based organizations, municipalities, and local education agencies. All of these courses are posted on an easy-to-use centralized registration website, called EnrollRI. The courses are offered in advanced placement, “readiness courses” to support the transition into high school or college, financial literacy, career credentials, work-based learning, dual enrollment, and enrichment. At the current date, RIDE has made 6,154 seats available for students, across 345 different courses offered by 66 different providers. RIDE also intends to allow students to access summer learning opportunities offered in other districts by allowing them to post their courses through a new “Course Share” function on EnrollRI. Over 2,800 of these course seats are for summer learning. These courses provide a range of important opportunities to students, from academic learning (such as AP classes) to enrichment (such as animation classes and an “adventure camp” at a local park), and provide opportunities for students to connect positively and address their social and emotional needs.

RIDE will also be launching a statewide initiative to expand high-dosage tutoring in districts across the state, as described in section D.1.i above.

- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3. i.--viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of summer learning and enrichment programs; and

The EnrollRI platform connects to RIDE’s statewide data system. This allows us to analyze patterns in which students are accessing these programs, and take action to address any equity concerns. Additionally, we are allocating seats in oversubscribed EnrollRI courses via a random lottery. This lottery will set aside a percentage of seats for students from priority groups most likely to be impacted by COVID to ensure those students have access to needed programs.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

RIDE collects data on attendance and mode of instruction for all students, which makes it possible for RIDE to identify the students who have struggled with attendance in either a virtual or in-person instructional environment. To further unpack the data, RIDE will use part of its state set-aside to expand research and analysis capacity, and develop data-informed recommendations for accelerating student learning after COVID-19. See section D.1.iii for more information.

3. Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for

evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs (including, for example, before-school programming), and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

- i. A description of the evidence-based programs (e.g., including partnerships with community-based organizations) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

Rhode Island has a long-standing commitment to high-quality, comprehensive afterschool programs that address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. Using the state's successful 21st Century Community Learning Center (RI 21st CCLC) grant model as a guide, RIDE will use funds under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act to support partnerships between LEA and CBOs to provide comprehensive afterschool programming. Grantees will design their programs using the [RI 21st CCLC Theory of Action](#) and follow the [Rhode Island Afterschool Quality Standards](#).

Applicants will be expected to provide evidence of a strong partnership between the LEA and one or more CBO(s), with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and capacities for each; structures to promote on-going, meaningful, two-way communication; and memoranda of understanding, which must address data-sharing.

Applications must include a description of the afterschool programming that the partners propose to provide, which must include:

- Academic enrichment that reinforces and complements the school day support;
- A broad array of enrichment activities which prioritize youth voice and choice;
- Social-emotional learning;
- Mental health supports and/or referrals; and
- Family engagement.

Applications will also describe the staffing structure and supports for staff, outreach and communication strategies, how they will address equity, program governance and management, data and evaluation strategies, and commitment to program quality improvement.

The evidence base for this approach comes from a recent rigorous, independent, [statewide evaluation of the RI 21st CCLC grant](#). The key impact analysis finding was (p. viii):

Overall, our results supported the proposition that ***high-quality 21st CCLC programs can have a positive impact on mathematics and ELA assessment scores, as well as school-day absences***. Our analyses for these three types of outcomes yielded multiple statistically significant and positive results (in terms of both all-group analysis and analysis by grade level). There also was evidence that 21st CCLC programs in our sample were having a ***positive impact on disciplinary incidents and suspensions*** (i.e., reductions), though those results were not quite as strong as the other results noted

(i.e., we saw fewer statistically significant results when analyzed by grade level).
[emphasis added]

Programs funded under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act will be evaluated using the state's existing Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment tools, which include both program observation tools (School-Age and Youth [Program Quality Assessments](#) from the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality) and an [organizational self-assessment](#).

- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of comprehensive afterschool programming; and

The Learning, Equity & Accelerated Pathways (LEAP) Task Force called out the need for Expanded Learning Opportunities as an equity strategy to address not only the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the deep systemic inequities that existed beforehand. The Task Force's [final report](#) notes (p. 35):

All extended learning opportunities should begin with the equity principle of targeting the students who need these opportunities the most, with specific attention to and flexibility for:

- Differently-abled students, multilingual learners, and students of color
- Students who travel back to their home countries during breaks from school, or who need to be able to work
- Students whose families may not be comfortable with sending their children back to in-person school.

Grantees will be expected to describe in their application how they will target these populations, as well as what data they will use to identify other underserved groups of students who may be in need of comprehensive afterschool services (e.g., students from low-income families, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, youth involved in the criminal justice system, and LGBTQ+ students etc.). In addition, applicants should outline how they will ensure the effectiveness of the afterschool services that they provide for these students. For differently-abled students and multilingual learners, in particular, strategies should reinforce and complement school-day efforts, in alignment with the LEAP Task Force recommendations for these students (final report, p. 33).

- iii. the extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

As noted in the [Learning, Equity & Accelerated Pathways Task Force Report](#) (p. 22), Rhode Island public schools experienced a 3.1 percent decrease in enrollment, or about 4,000 students, in the 2020-21 school year. Rates of decrease were even higher in the urban core communities of Central Falls (3.4%), Pawtucket (3.8%), Providence (5.9%), and Woonsocket (4.7%) - the communities targeted by these funds. Applicants will need to propose effective outreach strategies as well as specific youth, family, and community engagement strategies. An explicit purpose of these strategies will be to find, engage and re-enroll these students.

In addition, LEAs and their partner CBOs are expected to identify those students who were enrolled in their schools during COVID-19 pandemic but who missed the most in-person instruction and/or who did not consistently participate in remote instruction. These students should be targeted by the afterschool program and invited and encourage to attend, although best practices indicate that they should not be required to do so.

These afterschool programs will be a draw for students who may be disengaged, particularly if the programs are centered around positive relationships and allow students to explore their interests and passions. Anecdotal evidence as well as Rhode Island's own evaluation results show that high-quality afterschool programming promotes student engagement in learning, as well as actual increased school-day attendance.

1. **Emergency Needs:** If the SEA plans to reserve funds for emergency needs under section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act to address issues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, describe the anticipated use of those funds, including the extent to which these funds will build SEA and LEA capacity to ensure students' and staff's health and safety; to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs; and to use ARP ESSER funds to implement evidence-based interventions.

At this time, RIDE does not plan to request the invocation of Section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act in order to reserve funds for emergency needs.

E. Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs

The Department recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in developing high-quality plans for LEAs' use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives.

1. **LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds:** Describe what the SEA will require its LEAs to include in LEA plans consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements for the use of ARP ESSER funds, how the SEA will require such plans to be made available to the public, and the deadline by which the LEA must

submit its ARP ESSER plan (which must be a reasonable timeline and should be within no later than 90 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation). The LEA plans must include, at a minimum:

- i. The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning;
- ii. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;
- iii. How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and
- iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

All LEAs will be required to submit a subgrant application to access their allocation of ARP ESSER funds; the Back-to-School Plan will be a required component of submission. Upon the Department's approval, and pending Rhode Island Commissioner of Education and Rhode Island Governor approval, RIDE will open the application for ARP ESSER funds to LEAs (projected during the first week of July 2021). Fiscal guidance will be provided to LEAs and RIDE will resume its pod structure to provide direct point of contact technical assistance for LEAs.

Over the course of approximately eight weeks, LEAs will work to develop their plans and finalize their applications. LEAs will be required to (i) address the use of funds, as needed, to implement prevention and mitigation strategies aligned with the most up to date CDC guidance, and (ii) demonstrate the use of at least 20% of their allocation for evidence-based interventions to address learning loss, including, but not limited to, summer learning and enrichment, expanded learning, high-dosage tutoring, and other interventions to enrich extended learning and/or strengthen and accelerate core instruction.

Guidance for LEAs will detail allowable uses under section 2001(e) of the ARP Act. However, LEAs will be advised to assess the specific needs of their students, and will be encouraged to align expenditures with the LEAP Task Force absolute priorities as they relate to permissibility and requirements under section 2001(e) of the ARP Act (iii). Additionally, LEAs should prioritize the needs of diverse populations, including multilingual learners, differently-abled students, or students who are experiencing

homelessness or living in foster care. LEAs will be encouraged to consider social emotional wellness for all students, and pay close attention to needs identified around break-grades and transition points: PreK to K, elementary to middle, middle to high, high to postsecondary (iv). LEA applications must also demonstrate meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of their Back-to-School plan.

LEA applications for ARP ESSER funds with the required Back-to-School Plan component will be due in August, prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Upon programmatic and fiscal approval of applications and plans, LEAs will be required to post their final approved plans on their respective websites, which will be centrally accessible at back2schoolri.com.

2. **LEA Consultation:** Describe how the SEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, ensure that, consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, its LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - i. students;
 - ii. families;
 - iii. school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and
 - iv. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.

The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:

- i. Tribes;
- ii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
- iii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must also include how the SEA will ensure that LEAs provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds and take such input into account.

Communication is a critical component of each LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds. Through the LEAP Task Force process, RIDE modeled for all LEAs in the state an open, transparent, and participatory process by which to engage the community and a wide cross-section of stakeholders in meaningful consultation. Those resources are available in the public domain.

As such, all LEAs will be expected to demonstrate and provide evidence of meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of their Back-to-School Plan. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to: students, families, community members, school leaders, teachers and other school-based staff, unions, school board members, central office staff, and community partner organizations. Evidence may include but would not be limited to: a copy of a public meeting posting from a

municipality or Secretary of State, an agenda from a meaningful consultation meeting, or notes from such an engagement opportunity; RIDE will also include language in grant assurances requiring LEA affirmation. Thus, RIDE will not approve plans that do not show evidence of stakeholder engagement or key takeaways from community feedback.

In addition to demonstrating stakeholder engagement in plan development, LEAs will be expected to identify a process and mode to receive feedback and concerns on Back-to-School plans from stakeholders, so that review and any subsequent revisions may occur every six months during the grant period, as required by the ARP Act.

3. Describe how the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds. The description must include:
 - i. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs' implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, such as through summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs – including the extent to which the SEA will collect evidence of the effectiveness of interventions employed;

RIDE as the SEA has set clear performance metrics as part of the LEAP Task Force Report, and in coordination and aligned with the RIDE 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. All LEA applications for ARP/ESSER III funds will be aligned to both of these priority documents, while also being rooted in local need and data. This alignment will help to ensure that the SEA is able to collect information about effectiveness while supporting and monitoring.

- ii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in specifically addressing the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii; and

Specific attention to each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. will be included in RIDE's ESSER III application, in order to focus LEA attention on the specific and disproportionate impact of COVID-19 upon those student groups. Further, in RIDE's communication and technical assistance to LEAs, those student groups will be centered and intentionally designed-for, rather than treated as an addition or an afterthought.

- iii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, such as:
 1. Students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
 2. Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures; and

3. Students most at-risk of dropping out of school.

RIDE will support LEAs by helping them to identify, and thereafter, monitor how they are effectively reengaging and support students who have missed the most in-person instruction, who did not consistently participate, or who are at-risk of dropping out of school. These three priority areas align closely with the priorities articulated in the LEAP Task Force report. Additionally, RIDE will work to support LEAs with a “return to school” campaign that focuses specifically on the identified student groups, outlined above.

4. Describe the extent to which the SEA will support its LEAs in implementing additional strategies for taking educational equity into account in expending ARP ESSER funds, including but not limited to:
 - i. Allocating funding both to schools and for districtwide activities based on student need, and
 - ii. Implementing an equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction. An inclusive return to in-person instruction includes, but is not limited to, establishing policies and practices that avoid the over-use of exclusionary discipline measures (including in- and out-of-school suspensions) and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

As articulated in the LEAP Task Force Report, equity sits at the heart of all the work that RIDE endeavors to undertake. As such, RIDE as the SEA expects all its constituent LEAs— and will structure its subgrant application for ARP/ESSER III dollars in such a manner that-- will ensure that equity is the guiding lens through which they analyze their local data and identify the most pressing needs. This will be in accord with the equity lens RIDE asked LEAs to take for ESSER I and ESSER II, as well. To demonstrate the state agency’s commitment to an equity-centered approach, RIDE has elected to allocate a large portion of its state set-aside dollars to support our lowest-performing schools and districts. These funds will be provided in the form of a matching grant in addition to their local LEA allocation, and will be planned for and expended based on local data, a compelling evidence base, and clear demonstration of need.

In general, RIDE maintains that schools should establish “and promote a positive climate with emphasis on mutual respect, self-control, good attendance, order and organization, and proper security” as required in the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (RI BEP). The RI BEP goes on to say that “each LEA shall... define a set of discipline strategies... that ensure that students and adults make positive behavioral choices and that are conducive to a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success.” (G14-2.1.4)

Appropriate and effective discipline is designed to provide instruction to students intended to reduce the problem behavior. Schools must consider discipline as part of educational process and ensure their practices:

- Allow students to accept responsibility for their actions
- Place importance on the value of academic participation and achievement
- Build positive self-image

- Teach students alternative methods of dealing with problems (Beverly H. Johns & Valerie G. Carr, 2012)

School disciplinary measures should not be used to exclude students from school or otherwise deprive them of an education. Out of school suspension should be used as a last resort in schools in order to preserve the safety of students and staff.

Existing policies from SY2020-2021:

- RIDE encouraged LEAs to have clearly defined protocols in alignment with CDC and state guidance. For example, in-school mask mandates have been the norm for all of SY2020-2021. In a case of student refusal to adhere to protocols for face coverings, LEAs were urged to establish policies that recognize a student’s individual medical circumstance, and that do not ostracize, punish, add to trauma, or remove a student from access to learning.
- Accountability was waived for SY2020-2021, i.e. chronic absenteeism and suspension data will be publicly available, but not used for accountability purposes.

F. Supporting the Educator Workforce

The Department recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the Nation’s educators as well as students. In this section, SEAs will describe strategies for supporting and stabilizing the educator workforce and for making staffing decisions that will support students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

1. Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce:

- i.* Describe the extent to which the State is facing shortages of educators, education administration personnel, and other school personnel involved in safely reopening schools, and the extent to which they vary by region/type of school district and/or groups of educators (e.g., special educators and related services personnel and paraprofessionals; bilingual or English as a second language educators; science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) educators; career and technical education (“CTE”) educators; early childhood educators). Cite specific data on shortages and needs where available.

Rhode Island does not collect vacancy data from districts. As a proxy to help RIDE understand shortage area trends, the agency reviews the issuance of emergency certificates and other preliminary certificates. In recent years, shortages have steadily increased across several certificate areas. For the 2020-2021 school year, RIDE has issued more emergency certificates than in any other year.

In addition to this data, Rhode Island’s small size allows RIDE to meet regularly with all district leaders. Leaders report continued shortages across several areas (See Table F1). The data below do not provide a full picture of shortages since it only shows information at the point where a district seeks support from RIDE. RIDE knows that in these same certification areas, districts may have applicant pools of only

one or two individuals so the shortage picture is graver than it might seem. For context, Rhode Island has approximately 14,000 working educators. As outlined in the LEAP report, districts will plan and allocate resources to ensure staffing meets the needs of students.

Complete the table below, changing or adding additional rows as needed, or provide a narrative description.

Table F1.

Area	Data on shortages and needs	Narrative description
Special educators and related service personnel and paraprofessionals	89 shortages based on certificate data	Districts face shortages across all grade levels but particularly at the secondary level. Almost all students have been adversely impacted by the pandemic, but differently-abled students suffered more and will need more supports to accelerate their learning and benefit from additional services.
Bilingual educators	18	There are not enough educators who speak a language other than English and are trained as bilingual educators across all grade levels. As we work to increase programs, we face barriers to staffing the programs.
English as a second language educators	202	Despite state efforts to incentivize teachers to seek this certification, Rhode Island still faces shortages.
STEM educators	75	Shortages in STEM areas tend to be higher in certain sciences such as chemistry and physics. In secondary mathematics, districts report few applicants for open positions and difficulty finding strong teachers.
CTE educators	10	
Early childhood educators	34	As we work toward universal high-quality Pre-K we will need more certified early childhood educators and will look to expand prep program offerings.
School counselors	n/a	Districts report smaller applicant pools than in the past. Currently, there is only 1 preparation provider in Rhode Island for school counselors.
Social workers	n/a	Same as school counselors.
Nurses	n/a	Rhode Island recently opened a second pathway for school nurses and this has started to help the shortage situation.
School psychologists	n/a	

- ii. Describe how the SEA will assist its LEAs in identifying the most urgent areas of shortages or potential shortages, with particular plans for individual LEAs facing the most significant needs (e.g., by avoiding layoffs, providing high-quality professional learning opportunities, and addressing the impact of stress or trauma on educators). Include a description of how other Federal COVID-19 funding (e.g., ESSER and GEER funds under the CARES Act and

CRRSA Act) have already been used to avoid layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEAs will review and plan for vacancies. Some local contracts include retirement notification dates, while others do not. LEAs will review retirements, resignations, and any possible layoff situations to prioritize recruitment areas. ESSER funds may be used by RIDE to offer incentives to strengthen Rhode Island’s educator pipeline and mitigate barriers to certification, such as mentoring for new teachers or targeted supports during pre-service training.

Rhode Island schools have been open since Fall 2020, so teachers have been teaching all year without interruption to pay. Districts did not experience layoffs. RI’s guidance to LEAs outlines the need for professional learning and teacher supports. During this school year, RIDE implemented a statewide calendar that provided common professional development days. This practice will continue in 2021-22, allowing districts and the state to plan shared professional development opportunities. Based on recommendations from the LEAP Task Force, RIDE is committed to prioritizing professional development and continued growth by also supporting the social-emotional needs of educators and school staff – in addition to students. Educators have been able to participate in stress relief professional learning to support their well-being, and these opportunities will continue in 2021-22.

- iii. Describe the actions the SEA will take to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the start of the 2021-2022 school year and to what extent the SEA will further support its LEAs in expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity while addressing the immediate needs of students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (e.g., recruiting teaching candidates to provide high-dosage tutoring or implementing residencies for teacher candidates).

RIDE's strategic plan work has identified the need to set and monitor progress between July 2021 and July 2025 of a recruitment and retention model for educators of color. To support this work, RIDE has identified two strategies that will be funded through a portion of ARP ESSER resources.

RIDE anticipates approximately 500 new educators in a given year from educator preparation programs or alternative certification pathways. A portion of ARP ESSER funds will be dedicated to Praxis content supports. The state’s Educators of Color Committee identified the Praxis, and knowledge of existing Praxis support, as one barrier educators of color face at the end of pre-service training. RIDE plans to work in partnership with an ideal provider to support all Rhode Island teacher preparation candidates who are recent graduates and plan to enter a K12 school in the state, with special attention given to educators of color.

RIDE also plans to use a portion of ARP ESSER funds for mentoring supports for educators of color. This would involve a collaboration between RIDE and a partner organization, and would build a cohort of educators – including many from RIDE’s Educators of Color Committee - to provide mentoring to new educators of color across the state via a virtual coaching platform. Mentoring is an oft-identified way of

recruiting and retaining educators of color by providing them with culturally responsive, nonevaluative and informal support. This strategy for use of resources would expand the supports given to approximately 150 incoming Rhode Island educators of color, while simultaneously providing leadership experience to existing statewide educators of color, empowering them to build long-lasting careers in the state.

2. **Staffing to Support Student Needs:** Describe the extent to which the SEA has developed or will develop strategies and will support its LEAs in increasing student access to key support staff within school buildings, including school counselors, special education personnel, nurses, social workers, and psychologists (e.g. hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students).

RIDE’s LEAP Task Force recommendations for LEAs include planning and allocating resources with a clear and focused priority for supports and staffing related to every Rhode Island student, but especially those in the urban core, multilingual learners, and differently-abled students. Recommendations also include a strong focus on relationships for positive site climate, with the support of additional mental health or behavioral staff. To that end, RIDE has encouraged LEAs to allocate ESSER II dollars towards creative or collaborative approaches to human capital and staffing, particularly focused on expanding capacity to support identified student needs and social-emotional wellness, including, but not limited to, the following approaches:

- Additional social workers or guidance counselors to support mental health and wellness
- Partnerships with community mental health providers
- Supporting classroom implementation with instructional coaches in math and reading
- Hiring parents as ambassadors, navigators, translators, and other sources of support
- Repurposing roles to blend or braid responsibilities across job descriptions (e.g., creating half-time classroom teachers and half-time instructional coaches or interventionists)
- Thinking about strategically teaming teachers together, classroom sharing, or co-teaching approaches to support student needs

G. Monitoring and Measuring Progress

The Department recognizes that transparency on how ARP ESSER funds are used and their impact on the Nation’s education system is a fundamental responsibility of Federal, State, and local government. In this section, SEAs will describe how they are building capacity at the SEA and LEA levels to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting and to safeguard funds for their intended purposes.

1. **Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting:** It is important for an SEA to continuously monitor progress and make adjustments to its strategies, as well as to support its LEAs in making adjustments to LEA strategies, based on impact. Describe how the SEA will ensure its capacity and the capacity of its LEAs to collect data on reporting requirements, including but not limited to the examples of reporting requirements described in the SEA’s Grant Award Notification (listed

in Appendix B). Describe the SEA’s capacity and strategy to collect data from its LEAs (disaggregated by student group, where applicable), to the greatest extent practicable, including any steps the SEA will take to build its capacity in the future (which may include the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19 pandemic funds at the SEA and LEA levels), on issues that may include the following:

- i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);
- iii. Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);
- iv. Jobs created and retained (by position type);
- v. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and

Learning gaps and summer learning loss are not new challenges, but given the unprecedented challenges of students moving between in-person, hybrid, and distance learning during the past year because of COVID-19, the extent of the gaps and learning losses are still largely unknown. Interim assessment data from the fall and winter began to show differences at various grade levels where students did not perform as well as a national sample or as well as a prior year’s grade cohort. While RIDE cannot yet ascertain the final outcomes for this academic year, the state is fully implementing summative state assessments. This summative state assessment data will provide additional insight into learning during 2020-2021.

As RIDE plans for SY2021-2022, the state will again utilize interim assessments statewide to identify gaps in learning and track student progress. As the name suggests, interim assessments fall between formative and summative assessments. They are typically administered every 6 to 8 weeks at the school level. Their purposes include predicting a student’s ability to succeed on RICAS, and diagnosing gaps in students’ learning. RIDE plans to use a portion of ARP ESSER funds to offset LEA costs of interim assessments for two additional years, giving RIDE access to critical longitudinal data to measure the impact of lost instructional time due to COVID-19. RIDE knows what works to help students succeed – high expectations and rigorous grade-level instruction; therefore, our assessments need to provide the data needed to inform that instruction at the classroom and school level.

In addition to student achievement and growth measures, RIDE regularly collects data on attendance, suspensions, participation in advanced coursework and career and technical education, and dual and concurrent enrollment. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RIDE also began collecting survey data on access to technology at home and in school, as well as household access to high-speed internet. RIDE

annually collects survey data via SurveyWorks, the state’s culture and climate survey, which provides opportunity for student, family, and educator feedback on student engagement, educator learning, and family perceptions of school climate, among other themes.

RIDE plans to use ARP ESSER funds to expand capacity for data collection and analysis as it relates to initiatives implemented in response to COVID-19. The state will engage contracted support for data analysis, sharing, and research related to COVID recovery and implementation of projects funded by ESSER. RIDE will also build capacity through strategic partnerships for assessment-specific data analysis and supports. Given the increased opportunities for participation in summer programming, RIDE will additionally acquire term-limited staffing to oversee backend enrollment operations on the state’s EnrollRI system. RIDE also employs DataCenter dashboards that enhance SEA ability and capacity to consistently support the field. With resources from ARP ESSER, RIDE can double-down on its commitment to providing technical assistance and training for LEAs to better report data to the SEA, and better access and use the data available to them. Ultimately, these strategic uses of funds will enhance RIDE implementation and coordination capacity, and ensure data-driven decision-making.

2. **Monitoring and Internal Controls:** Describe how the SEA will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the SEA’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). In this response, please describe the SEA’s current capacity to monitor ARP ESSER; steps, if needed, to increase capacity; and any foreseeable gaps in capacity, including how the SEA will provide its LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need.

RIDE has a federally approved monitoring plan for sub-recipients of federal grant dollars; at this time, RIDE intends to fold this scope of work into that plan, which includes an annual risk assessment of all LEAs, a survey, desk audits, and on-site monitoring visits. At the time of submission, RIDE does not have the additional capacity to expand monitoring beyond this approach. However, the agency-- in coordination with the Governor’s office-- is working to secure additional contracted and term-limited resources to support this work. In the meantime, RIDE will continue with traditional reviews and risk assessments for each LEA every year, in addition to ten on-site audits annually, given staff capacity. For this year and subsequent years, the risk assessment will focus on the ED-articulated priorities within and for CRRSA and ARP, in order to ensure that the funds are spent in accordance with the LEA plans, and all purchasing processes or hiring policies are followed. When more staff are identified, RIDE will immediately expand monitoring and internal controls.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

Indicate the date or time period represented by the following data.

Data is as of 5/20/2021. Table 2 includes enrollment types: outplace (O), regular (O), and alternate learning programs (A). There were 1,466 students where method of instruction was not reported; these are included in an additional column on the far right.

Table 1a.

In the most recent time period available, how many schools in your State offered each mode of instruction or learning model described below? Each row should account for all schools in your State, so that, for each row, the sum of the numbers in the “offered to all students,” “offered to some students,” and “not offered” columns is equal to the number in the “all schools” column.

*For the 2020-21 school year, all schools were required to offer a remote learning option as a choice for any parent/student that wanted it. Thus, even if a school was open fully for in-person learning, remote learning was offered to all students as an option. The data below includes the number of schools that were open for each of the learning models described below.

Number of schools	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	307	283	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	28	28	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	279	279	N/A	0

To the extent data are available, please complete the above table for 1) all schools in the State, and 2) separately for each instructional level (e.g., pre-kindergarten/elementary schools, middle schools, high schools).

Table 1b.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	187	187	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	6	6	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	181	181	N/A	0

Table 1c.

MIDDLE SCHOOL	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	54	54	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	2	2	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	52	52	N/A	0

Table 1d.

HIGH SCHOOL	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	54	54	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	16	16	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	38	38	N/A	0

Table 1e.

STATE-RUN SCHOOLS	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	3	3	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	1	1	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	2	2	N/A	0

Table 1f.

SCHOOLS WITH MULTIPLE GRADE SPAN	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only*	9	9	N/A	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	3	3	N/A	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	6	6	N/A	0

Table 2

In the most recent time period available, what was the enrollment and mode of instruction for the schools in your State?

Number of students	Total enrollment	Remote or online only	Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Full-time in-person instruction	Method of instruction not reported
Students from low-income families	61,172	17,817	16,000	26,819	536
White, not Hispanic	74,810	16,309	11,899	45,885	717
Black or African American, not Hispanic	12,482	3,771	3,358	5,193	160
Hispanic, of any race	39,314	11,238	11,731	15,900	445
Asian, not Hispanic	4,510	1,915	956	1,604	35
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	1,158	299	350	497	12
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	203	73	41	87	2
Two or more races, not Hispanic	6,824	1,963	1,247	3,519	106
English learners	15,621	3,717	4,178	7,623	103
Children with disabilities	23487	5,064	4,131	13,180	1,112
Students experiencing homelessness	847	178	153	505	11
Children and youth in foster care <i>(Data not available)</i>					
Migratory students <i>(Data not available)</i>					

Appendix B: Reporting Language Included in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”)

As described in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”), the SEA will comply with, and ensure that its LEAs comply with, all reporting requirements at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require, including on matters such as:

- How the State 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 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 (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;
- SEA and 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;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to 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 Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (“FFATA”); and
- Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

Appendix C: Assurances

By signing this document, the SEA assures all of the following:

- The SEA will conduct all 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 SEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the Department under any of these statutes;
- The SEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements and all requirements of its Grant Award Notification, including but not limited to:
 - Complying with the maintenance of effort provision in section 2004(a)(1) of the ARP Act, absent a waiver by the Secretary pursuant to section 2004(a)(2) of the ARP Act; and
 - Complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(b) of the ARP Act, and ensuring its LEAs comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act (please note that the Department will provide additional guidance on maintenance of equity shortly);
- The SEA will allocate ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the SEA receives ARP ESSER funds (i.e., 60 days from the date the SEA receives each portion of its ARP ESSER funds). An SEA that is not able to allocate such funds within 60 days because it is not practicable (e.g., because of pre-existing State board approval requirements) will provide an explanation to the Department within 30 days of receiving each portion of its ARP ESSER funds (submitted via email to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)), including a description of specific actions the SEA is taking to provide ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and the SEA's expected timeline for doing so;
- The SEA will implement evidence-based interventions as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act and ensure its LEAs implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act;
- The SEA will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity), gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender), English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act, and ensure its LEAs address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups, gender, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and

youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act; and

- The SEA will provide to the Department: (1) the URL(s) where the public can readily find data on school operating status and (2) the URL(s) for the SEA and/or LEA websites where the public can find the LEA plans for a) the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services required under section 2001(i) of the ARP Act, and b) use of ARP ESSER funds. SEAs should consider ensuring a standardized URL format in all cases (e.g., xxx.gov/COVIDplan).

Appendix D

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 06/30/2023)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act ("GEPA") that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-

assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access to, or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.