

SECTION C Budget Narrative

Administration

\$1,071,232

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has budgeted the allowable amount for administrative costs to prepare for, implement, and monitor the funds provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Included in these costs are for temporary grant positions to coordinate and manage the necessary administrative work, fixed charges for those applicable staff, technology, supplies, and materials for those staff. In addition, these costs also include increased technology supplies for other agency staff to enable them to support districts through remote telecommuting services, as well as indirect costs. Costs for administration are included in Section A as follows:

Personnel-	\$677,250
Fringe Benefits-	\$270,900
Contractual-	\$8,280
Supplies-	\$69,654
Indirect Cost-	\$45,148

Clarification for “Other” Category in Section A- \$4,841,519:

Special Schools Subgrants

\$200,000

South Carolina has identified four state special schools (defined statutorily as local educational agencies) that current are not recipients of Title I, Part A funds. As such, they were not entitled to a proportional amount allocation from the 90 percent flow through funds from the State’s award. To ensure that the critical needs of these four special schools are met, the South Carolina Department of Education has decided to provide each of the four with subgrants in the amount of \$50,000. Those special schools include:

- The South Carolina School for Arts and Humanities
- The South Carolina School for Science and Math
- The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind; and
- The Wil Lou Gray Academy

These special schools will be required to select from the list of twelve approvable activities for the use of ESSER funds, and will be required to assure to all applicable state and federal policies, regulations, statutes, and provisions.

District Incentive Supplemental Subgrants

\$3,311,519

The SCDE recognizes the need to close the digital divide in South Carolina, and ensure that students have access to technology to facilitate remote learning during, and in case of, school closures. To that end, the SCDE is setting aside \$3,311,519 as incentive subgrants to eligible LEAs. To be eligible, the LEA must obligate at least 40 percent of its ESSER subgrant on any two of the following:

1. Purchasing content/licenses from a statewide contract approved by the SCDE for Learning Management System (LMS);
2. Expanding connectivity for students to enable distance learning (i.e., hot spots, access points, use of district property for internet or 5G expansion, etc.);
3. Providing devices for teachers and students to access distance learning;
4. Licensing systems that support distance learning infrastructure (e.g., class rostering systems, single sign-on systems, online classroom management systems, inventory tracking systems, etc.); and/or
5. Providing professional development to teachers and faculty on using the LMS system and/or professional development in training teachers how to effectively deliver remote digital learning.

A memorandum was shared with LEAs on June 5, 2020. In the next few months, the SCDE will begin developing criteria to rank LEAs and determine specific supplemental award amounts. Through this effort, the SCDE hopes that LEAs with extensive technology needs and high digital divides will participate, thereby improving and increasing the opportunities for remote and digital learning for their students.

Total amount budgeted for supplemental, incentive subgrants to school districts = \$3,311,519.

Food Services

\$1,000,000

The SCDE will provide additional funding to districts to cover the additional food service meal cost and additional service labor cost not covered by USDA reimbursements during the pandemic. School districts in South Carolina continued to provide meals to students during school closure. Funding will be provided at the rate of \$.40/meal for increased meal cost and \$.40/meal for increased food service labor cost.

District Allocations for Professional Development for a Learning Management System (LMS) and Learning Object Repository (LOR)

\$330,000 District Allocations for PD/Implementation

The SCDE proposes expanding an existing program for remote instruction during inclement weather make up days to include all districts as the vehicle for delivering professional development on LMS systems, the LOR, and high-quality instruction. As part of this plan, mentor districts who have experience with LMS systems and the delivery of online content would be assigned in regions to assist with implementation. The SCDE estimates that \$330,000 will be allocated to districts for this effort.

Description of Large Covered Funds- \$ 15,718,360:**LMS and LOR and Professional Development and Preparation**

\$6,806,699 – Learning Management System (LMS) and Learning Object Repository (LOR) Licenses

The coronavirus (COVID-19) caused the closing of South Carolina's school buildings in March 2020. From that point through the end of the year, districts engaged in remote instruction, some with paper packets, some fully online, and some in blended learning models. As a result, districts identified a greater need for learning management systems (LMS) to plan, coordinate, deliver, and monitor this remote instruction. Districts also found that many teachers were not proficient in planning for and delivering content online. There is also a statewide need for professional development on implementation of LMS systems as well as how to plan and deliver high-quality content. The SCDE proposes a statewide hosted learning object repository (LOR) of curated high-quality content aligned to South Carolina standards to improve the quality of learning and reduce the burden on South Carolina's teachers. In addition, the LMS system can be a vehicle for the SCDE to provide professional development while modeling how to appropriately deliver high-quality, engaging content to learner. After review of four LMS systems on state contract and demonstrations by two LOR vendors, the SCDE estimates that approximately \$6.8 million is needed for licenses/development costs.

\$170,000- Training Stipends for Curation of Content and Professional Learning

In addition to the \$330,000 in district allocations for professional development related to the LMS and LOR referenced above, teachers from across the state will be engaged to develop a statewide rubric to identify critical characteristics of high quality content for the LOR and would partner with SCDE for the initial curation of content and professional learning. The SCDE estimates that an additional \$170,000 will be needed to implement this effort.

Learning Object Repository (LOR) Content Development

\$1,000,000

The COVID-19 school closure highlighted the inequities across the state in providing all students with quality curriculum and instructional delivery. Content provided in a Learning Object Repository (LOR) will allow all teachers in the state to access resources, lessons, assessments, videos, curriculum, and any other ‘object’ needed to build a quality, standards-based lesson. All objects in the repository will be vetted by a field of state experts in curriculum content and technical support.

The \$1,000,000 allocation will fund lesson and content development by a writing team at each grade level and content area. Additionally, the allocation will be used to purchase research-based content already developed and proven to be results-driven. Ultimately, the LOR will reduce teacher preparation time and allow for strategic focus on the quality of the delivery and diagnosing student needs.

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)

\$500,000

All schools in South Carolina closed on March 16, 2020 and remained closed for the remainder of the school year. To date, the timeline for reopening schools is uncertain. All school districts are developing reopening plans as well as resurgence plans. In preparation for the 2020-21 school year and beyond, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is providing professional learning in delivering effective virtual instruction. As teachers move to virtual learning, many are asking how strong teaching practices translate to the online environment. The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) has developed a tool to describe what key instructional indicators should look like when planning and delivering virtual instruction in both asynchronous and synchronous learning environments. The tool is a companion to the South Carolina Teaching Standards rubric also developed by NIET.

The allocation of \$500,000 will fund teacher training statewide. NIET has developed virtual training on the companion tool for both teacher and school leaders. The three synchronous modules are approximately 1.5 hours in length and each module does a deep dive into the following virtual teaching and learning topics: planning, instruction, and environment.

Student Information Systems Upgrades

\$1,600,000 for PowerSchool

\$780,000 for Ed-Fi API

With the coronavirus, districts have engaged in remote instruction that has required expansion of technology infrastructure. Most districts are using some type of learning management system (LMS) for the COVID-19 remote instruction. This requires class rostering and grade exchange between the LMS and PowerSchool student information system (SIS). The \$1.6 million

expenditure would improve the PowerSchool student information system (SIS) services to better facilitate the use of a learning management systems (LMS) for remote instruction by all districts. We would implement one consistent version of PowerSchool on 80-instances of a hosted solution and implement the Ed-Fi API that would allow seamless transfer of class rostering information between the SIS and the districts' LMSs. Rostering is not a one-time process; districts doing remote instruction commit substantial resources to updating the student rosters. The Ed-Fi API would also allow for seamless transfer of grades between the LMS and the SIS gradebook, another task that either requires duplicative data entry or takes substantial technology resources for districts using LMS systems. SCDE does not currently have the funds for this in its budget; however, it is asking for recurring future funding from the legislature. The \$780,000 is one-time funding for building out the district operational data store (ODS) infrastructure with Ed-Fi APIs to facilitate all this on the district end.

Please note that the benefits are not only class rostering and gradebook exchange from LMS systems, but those were the two most connected with the online learning component. Once districts are on hosted ODS solutions, they can join forces on other technology infrastructure that supports remote instruction, such as single sign-on, dashboards, and reporting. Right now districts negotiate as 80 different entities with varying (and inequitable) charges by the vendors based on size.

VirtualSC Middle School Expansion

\$1,633,201

As a result of the prolonged school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Carolina Department of Education developed the AccelerateED Task Force to review needs and help schools prepare for their return to school. Among the recommendations provided by the Task Force one was to expand VirtualSC opportunities for students in grades below high school. This need is enforced by the fact that VirtualSC currently provides virtual option for public, private, home school, and Adult Education students in grades 9-12, so these students have opportunities to take courses virtually in the event of a health condition, concerns with returning to school in the fall, or when out of school due to the pandemic; however, students at lower grade levels do not have the same opportunity. Funds would be utilized to expand the VirtualSC program to serve students approximately 7,500 student enrollments per year in grades 6-8. The program would hire full time and part time South Carolina certified educators to teach and work on curriculum development to develop out courses and materials needed to serve students in these grade levels. The program would begin development in 2020 and would pilot teaching the courses with students in January 2021.

Transportation

\$1,000,000

The SCDE used state-owned buses to deliver meals to students during school closure and provided buses for WIFI hotspots during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three hundred WIFI devices were purchased to allow the districts to serve students without WIFI. Several districts are continuing to use in the summer and these will be available if schools return to virtual learning. The SCDE also has ordered sanitizing/cleaning supplies for the 180 bus parking locations in the state. This will enable the school districts to sanitize the buses twice a day. Cost for the electrostatic sprayers and BioTab7 is \$780,780.24. We estimate that we will spend \$3500-\$4000 per day for the cleaning of all 5600 buses in the state through December

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

\$1,828,460

In order to assist public school districts in meeting the protective needs of students and teachers, the SCDE is purchasing protective masks. Specifically, the SCDE is purchasing 25,000 masks for students participating in summer face-to-face Academic Recovery Camps. In addition, the SCDE is purchasing 400,000 cloth masks for educators, cafeteria staff, bus staff, and custodial staff (2 for each staff member). Finally, the SCDE is purchasing 780,000 masks for students (1 for each student).

Public Service Announcements

\$400,000

The SCDE recognizes the importance of keeping communities informed about the many changes happening in and with South Carolina's schools. To meet this challenge, the SCDE, working with a contractor, will develop and launch a series of public service announcements that will give families and community members important information about school reopening, school cleaning procedures, and opportunities for learning.