

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

April 6, 2021

Dear [Commissioner] XXXXX:

As we take a historic step forward together in helping schools reopen and remain open safely with enactment of the *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021*, I want to recognize the extraordinary, ongoing efforts of you and your colleagues in confronting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the work you have done to continue to ensure that America’s students receive the high-quality education they deserve.

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the ARP Act, which will deliver critical aid to school districts, schools, educators, students, and families in States and Outlying Areas as the country continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is with this same sense of urgency that the Outlying Areas should plan to expend these funds to safely return to and maximize in-person instruction as expeditiously as possible this spring, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the significant needs of students.

Today, you will receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN) through the Federal grants management system (G5) providing access to your Outlying Area’s allocation under the ARP Outlying Areas State Educational Agency (ARP-OA SEA) Fund. ARP-OA SEA funds will enable SEAs in the Outlying Areas to enact appropriate measures to help schools to implement mitigation strategies consistent with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html) to the greatest extent practicable; address the many impacts of COVID-19 on students, including from interrupted instruction; implement strategies to meet students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs; offer crucial evidence-based summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs; support early childhood education; invest in staff capacity; and avoid devastating layoffs at this critical moment, ensuring that all students have access to teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to support their needs. It is particularly important that ARP-OA SEA funding will enable your schools to support students who have been most severely impacted by the pandemic and are likely to have suffered the most because of longstanding inequities in our communities and schools.

Your GAN will make available $XX,XXX,XXX to [Outlying Area] and explain the terms and conditions for the use of ARP-OA SEA funds. ARP-OA SEA funds will allow the Outlying Areas to take additional steps to safely reopen schools for in-person instruction and keep them open, and also to build capacity at the local level to address the disruptions to teaching and learning resulting from the pandemic. Included in the terms and conditions is a requirement to submit within 90 days of receipt of the ARP-OA SEA funds an implementation plan, which should include information on intended use of funds, how resources will be spent to safely reopen and sustain the safe operations of schools, and how the immediate and ongoing academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students will be addressed.

The enclosed table shows Outlying Area allocations for ARP-OA SEA funds. These allocations are based on the proportion of funds that each Outlying Area received under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in fiscal year 2020. If you or your staff have questions, please reach out to us directly or submit questions to the ESF Outlying Mailbox: ESF.Outlying@ed.gov.

On behalf of the Department, I am committed to supporting the Outlying Areas in implementing these unprecedented resources to promote safe school operations and equity-driven, sustainable, evidence-based programs to serve students – especially those who are the furthest from opportunity – and to continue to strengthen teaching and learning. You have my promise that the Department will do everything in its power to respond efficiently to your questions, provide robust technical assistance and guidance to support evidence-based local decision-making, and put students first as we assist the Outlying Areas in utilizing the ARP-OA SEA funding.

With ARP-OA SEA and other funds, the American Rescue Plan represents an extraordinary commitment to the Nation’s students from early childhood to postsecondary education – and to our shared future.

Thank you for your hard work and continued commitment to students in [Outlying Area].

 Sincerely,

 Ian Rosenblum

Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education