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

U.S. Department of Education

Issued: April 21, 2021

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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.

Grantee and Contact Information

ARP ESSER PR Award Number: S425U210051

SEA Contact: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Telephone: 307-777-7675

Email address: superintendent@wyo.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 (Printed Name) **Jillian Balow**	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative	Date: 6/7/21

Overview

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) has chosen to submit the State's plan on the template provided by the United States Department of Education (USED). This draft plan represents a collaborative effort from many WDE departments and teams. Input was provided from the School Support Division: ESSA Grant Team, CTE Team, and Nutrition Programs Team; the Special Education Programs Division; the Accountability Division: Student and Teacher Resources Team; the Standards and Assessment Division: Assessment Team, Standards Team; Finance Division: School Foundations Team; and Information Management Division: Data Collection and Reporting Team.

Input from various stakeholders has been collected to inform decision making from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and was further focused to assist in the development of Wyoming's ARP ESSER State Plan. The WDE is keenly aware that national, state, and local conditions can change quickly resulting in the need for an adjusted response. With this understanding, the WDE recognizes the dynamic nature of the ARP ESSER State Plan and anticipates the need to make changes when necessary, including the receipt of updated data sets and ongoing stakeholder input. This current plan has been prepared in response to USED's required submission date of June 7, 2021. Many datasets are constantly changing. Any data reported in the plan is either time stamped or the most current available. The WDE has chosen not to report some datasets as the data is not current, and therefore not an accurate reflection.

The WDE takes this opportunity to inform USED that it was unable to allocate ARP ESSER funds to our LEAs within 60 days of receiving funds because it was not practicable due to state requirements governing the acceptance of federal funds.

Wyoming statute sets forth specific requirements for approval and acceptance of new federal program funding. The "B-11" process is used by the State Budget Department and the Governor's Office to process requests for new or unappropriated federal program funding and significant dollar expansions to existing programs and/or additional personnel requirements.

W.S. 9-2-1005(b) allows the Governor to increase legislative appropriations from non-general fund sources. Through the B-11 process, budgets can be increased with federal and other funds that have not been appropriated by the Wyoming Legislature. This process makes it possible for state agencies to receive new federal and other funds that are available to the state. This process typically takes multiple weeks and must be completed before any new funds may be expended or allocated to subrecipients. Only after the B-11 process has been finalized can we complete the budget setup to manage the funds. This process has not yet been finalized.

While the B-11 process is occurring, the WDE has met other requirements outlined in the assurances detailed in Attachment T of Wyoming's ARP ESSER GAN, specifically, item number three. The WDE communicated to each district its full allocation amount on March 29, 2021. Communication included language specific to the requirement to use a minimum of 20% of the total allocation to address learning loss.

To be prepared to move forward as quickly as possible the WDE has created the LEA application reflecting federal requirements and will make the application available in our grants management system (GMS) once the B-11 process completes.

Table of Contents

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. <u>Progress and Promising Practices</u>: 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.**

Response:

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WDE has sought to hold up LEAs in continued support of all Wyoming students, including those most at risk of being disproportionately negatively impacted through changed educational opportunities. The WDE provided district leadership with information and structures necessary to engage all students. Of note were the launching of a [COVID-19 Resources](#) page on the WDE website, the development of guidance documents, and Superintendent COVID-19 Response meetings.

On-going Superintendent COVID-19 Response meetings began in March, 2020, and continued on a regular basis through September, culminating with the WDE's Wyoming Education Summit (WES). Additional meetings were held intermittently as needed through the fall and winter. Many meetings were held collaboratively with Wyoming's Department of Health (WDH) to provide current information and guidance around preventive measures to protect against the spread of the Coronavirus in communities and schools, community health protocols, statewide practices, and on-going updates to health orders. Other state agencies and organizations partnered for presentations including a Wyoming Department of Family Services (WDFS) presentation on childcare and child protection; updates about student participation and flexibility through the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's Community Colleges; and the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board's (PTSB) emergency rules for licensure addressing potential personnel shortages. Additional topics presented by WDE personnel included the use of ESSER I and II funds, GEER funds determinations and disbursement, temporary school closures, alternative educational delivery models, return to school plans, spring assessment and accountability adjustments, delivery of special education services and IDEA responsibilities, school nutrition and food service, PPE purchasing, pupil transportation, and updates on other federal funds waivers and uses.

From March through the end of the 2019-20 school year, students were supported with the development of LEA Adapted Learning Plans (ALP). These plans were developed by every district and addressed alternative educational delivery models implemented during the near nation-wide school building closure. Five Wyoming LEAs presented best practices to include personalized learning, attendance and engagement tracking and escalation procedures, and

professional development for teachers thrust into online instruction models. These ALPs guided instructional practice through the remainder of the year and were foundational for preparing for the 2020-21 school year.

The WDE has identified two effective strategies to highlight: Smart Start Guidance/Plans and Classroom Based Virtual Education.

Strategy 1: Smart Start Guidance/Plans

Overview
Regarding strategies that have been effective in supporting the needs of students in the State during the COVID-19 pandemic, one is the development and shared practices of the WDE's Smart Start Guidance. This guidance was created by the Smart Start Taskforce in collaboration with the WDH as a key facilitator. The taskforce included: policy officers from the Governor's Office, Superintendent of Public Instruction, WDE Chief of Staff, WDH personnel, District Superintendents, School Board members, Principals, Teachers, Public Health Nursing, District School Nurse, After School Alliance representative, Broadband Communications representative and WDE staff.

Development
The Smart Start Taskforce held a series of meetings during May-June 2020 to consider research and the development of a practical guidance tool that would assist school districts in reopening in the fall of 2020. This guidance included assurances, definitions and the components (communication, safety and wellness, school operations measures, and instruction and technology) that would support the needs of students across the academic setting. Within each section of the guidance document, resources were provided that aligned to requirements, recommendations and/or considerations depending on the tier of operation. An appendix provided additional information on daily screening protocols and communication.

Prior to the roll out of the Smart Start guidance, a presentation was shared with the Governor's COVID-19 Education Taskforce for further review. Following this review, the guidance was made publicly available on July 1, 2020, with the expectation that districts/schools would have Smart Start plans developed by August 3, 2020 for the fall academic year.

To fully support LEAs with the development of Smart Start plans at the district level, weekly Superintendents COVID-19 Response Zoom meetings were held with the LEAs to provide an overview of the document and a rationale for its implementation. The WDH played a pivotal role in communicating CDC Guidelines and state guidelines during each Zoom meeting. Districts were required to follow the provisions of the state and/or local health orders within their plans.

Implementation
Early in the implementation phase of Smart Start, during a WDE facilitated Superintendents COVID-19 Response Zoom meeting, several district superintendents shared their plans related

to communication, safety and wellness, school operations and instruction and technology. Open dialogue and questions were addressed to support the concerns of districts. A feedback cycle of communication and support was provided from the SEA to LEAs as plans were submitted to ensure the needs of students were being met. The WDE also launched the COVID-19 Resources website with up-to-date resources, CDC Guidance documents and access to local health requirements. Departments within the agency held ongoing monthly meetings to consider questions and problem-solve around virtual learning options and connectivity.

As districts submitted their Smart Start plans to the WDE and posted them on their local sites, they became available to the public as a shared resource for best practices within the state. Districts continued to update their plans during the 2020-21 school year as changes occurred aligned to the state health orders.

A follow up meeting was held in January 2021 with the Smart Start Taskforce to gather information around implementation measures and best practices along with specific needs at the school level. This information guided the SEA in resource allocation, professional development training options and long-term needs identification.

Continued efforts: Lessons learned/Best Practices Involvement Efforts
- Reconvene Smart Start Taskforce to share and publish lessons learned after implementation of Smart Start plans during the 2020-21 academic year.
- Host a panel discussion during the fall WES Conference on best practices.
- Gather input from Superintendents, Principals, Teachers through state organizational meetings and surveys.
- Seek input from WDE's Level Up Program with identified Teacher Leaders (one example that has been implemented includes the development of motivating messages from teacher leaders to encourage educators in the field).

Strategy 2: Classroom-based Virtual Education (CBVE)

Overview
A second effective strategy to assist Wyoming school districts in continuing to serve students during the COVID-19 pandemic was the adoption of emergency language in the Chapter 41 Virtual Education Rules which allowed LEAs to increase virtual learning opportunities during the 2020-21 school year. The revisions to the rules authorized school districts to provide virtual instruction as needed from classroom-based courses. To assist LEAs with understanding the revised rules instruction options, as well as existing distance delivery statutes and rules, the 2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts was developed and disseminated.

Development
Although the Smart Start framework described in Strategy one above laid out requirements, recommendations, and considerations that helped almost all schools open in the fall of 2020, there were 15% to 30% of students in each district who were seeking full-time virtual education

delivery. Additionally, some classrooms were identified as too small to adhere to the appropriate social distancing requirements in the Smart Start guidance. To reduce health risks, districts considered alternating on and off site schedules so fewer students would be on campus. There were also concerns about how to continue delivering instruction if students or staff were in quarantine.

To address each possible scenario of concern districts were facing, the WDE formed an internal work group that included the Attorney General that is assigned to the agency to revise and adopt emergency Chapter 41 rules providing the flexibility needed. The work group carefully constructed the requirements for classroom-based virtual education (CBVE) to ensure students without internet access would be provided with the same content and learning opportunities. A streamlined application and approval process was developed and the language pertaining to the CBVE strategies was reviewed in the district Smart Start plan submissions.

Implementation
The emergency Chapter 41 revisions, the classroom-based virtual education program application and assurance, and the 2020-21 Distance Learning: Guidance for Wyoming School Districts were drafted and introduced to districts in July 2020. Two training sessions were provided to districts the second week of July. The recordings of the training sessions with all accompanying documents were emailed to districts afterwards and the CBVE application and assurance form were posted online.

The CBVE applications were reviewed and approved to ensure that educational delivery conforms to the statewide uniform system of education. 43 of 48 school districts and one charter school submitted applications and were approved to deliver CBVE programs. School districts utilized the flexibility of CBVE to provide full-time virtual instruction to students who were not comfortable returning to school, to provide instruction when students or staff were in quarantine, to implement alternating schedules limiting student populations on campus, to provide virtual days when there were COVID-19-related issues or concerns, and to provide virtual days when there were weather-related issues or concerns.

Continued Efforts: Lessons Learned/Best Practices Involvement Efforts
- Legislation was introduced and passed during the 2020 session to provide a method for districts to continue to provide virtual learning opportunities in classroom-based courses.
- The WDE is working on behalf of the State Board of Education to revise permanent rules to implement the statutory changes in Senate Enrolled Act No. 42.
- Support is being provided to districts that want to implement regular full-time virtual education programs to serve those students who prefer the virtual learning environment.
- The WDE is surveying the 43 school districts who implemented classroom-based virtual education programs for input on the rules changes that will allow for the continued flexibility of virtual learning in classroom courses.
- The survey will include information about the submission of lessons learned and best practices to the *Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse.*

2. <u>Overall Priorities</u>: 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. Click here to enter text.

Response:
The WDE has identified the following as overall priorities.

Priority 1: Understanding and addressing academic gaps due to interrupted learning opportunities and student participation in varied learning platforms.
- Most students experienced a change in instructional delivery from the traditional format. This was often the result of needing to keep students in small groups of learners (Smart Start Plans).
- Educators expressed concerns over a lack of training to deliver instruction virtually (Smart Start Plans).
- It is perceived that students are less engaged in virtual learning when compared to face-to-face instruction (2020-21 Pandemic Impact Survey for Teachers).
- Students report having learned less and experiencing greater challenges in staying engaged during virtual learning (Superintendent Stakeholder Road trip May 2021).
- Educators of young children express concern over lost instructional time due to extra time spent on health protocols (hand washing, etc.), the need to take frequent breaks to remove masks for hydration, and the interference of the mask itself during literacy instruction (2020-21 Pandemic Impact Survey for Teachers, Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).
- Individual students experienced interruptions to instruction due to quarantine, pre-existing health conditions, extended family concerns, or family preference (2020-21 Pandemic Impact Survey for Teachers).
- Educators, both teachers and administrators, expressed concern about students in grades K-3, as the learning in these grades is foundational in nature for all content areas (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).
- Educators expressed concerns over intervention opportunities for all students K-12 due to a lack of interventionists and the need to keep intervention groups germane to specific student attendance cohorts (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).
- Educators have expressed frustration in the loss of intervention programs specific to math and the lack of professional development programs that are focused explicitly on math (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).
- There is concern over the loss of funding for traditional summer school programs and extended learning programs (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).
- There are concerns over a lack of data as spring 2020 assessment was suspended, and in understanding the data from Spring 2021 assessment in light of the variations in the 2020-21 school year instructional delivery (2020-21 Pandemic Impact Survey for Teachers, Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021).

Data: The concerns detailed above are the result of qualitative data collected through various means. Quantitative assessment data from the 2020-21 WYTOPP, Wyoming's annual academic assessment, is currently being evaluated and analyzed for various trends and includes a review of participation rates, achievement rates, and potential gaps between student subgroups in comparison to the rates for all students. This data will be publicly available September 1, 2021.

Additional data will be collected about literacy in grades K-3 through the annual October submission of District Literacy Plans as required by W.S. 21-3-401.

Priority 2: Understanding and addressing the social, emotional and mental health needs of all individuals in the education system
- Educators, parents, and students express a concern centered on the lack of personnel, specifically school counselors and school psychologists. It was noted that many in these roles are assigned duties that could be successfully completed by paraprofessionals (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021, Superintendent Stakeholder Roadtrip May 2021).
- Students expressed feelings of missing friends, having a hard time developing and maintaining relationships amidst COVID-19, feeling disconnected from peers and adults in the school setting- each leading to feelings of isolation, discouragement, and increased experiences of depression (Superintendent Stakeholder Roadtrip May 2021).
- Educators and students express concerns over increased mental health needs at home and in the school setting and noted limited community resources and the need for more out of school assistance (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021; Superintendent Stakeholder Roadtrip May 2021).
- Community members, educators, and students express concerns over increased youth suicide and the need for additional resources and training (Topic Specific Stakeholder Group Discussions April 2021; Superintendent Stakeholder Roadtrip May 2021; Testimony during state legislative session, Spring 2021).
- Data provided from the Wyoming Safe2Tell Program Manager indicates that tips regarding suicide in relation to the overall tips received increased from 9% in Jan 2020 to 16% in Jan 2021. When comparing March 2020 to March 2021 threats of suicide tips, Wyoming saw an increase of the overall tips received, 142 in March 2021 compared to 113 in March 2020. Tips regarding suicide in relation to the overall tips received were 31.86% in March 2020 to 11.97% in March 2021.

Data: The concerns detailed above are primarily the result of qualitative data collected through various means. Quantitative data remains minimal, but valuable nonetheless. Additional quantitative data sources will be pursued to include LEA level data.

3. <u>Identifying Needs of Underserved Students</u>: 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,[1] chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

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

Response:

The WDE recognizes the unique challenges that may be present for each student group identified as Underserved Students. While there may be unique challenges, Wyoming's approach will be to address these challenges through the identified priorities previously listed in section A-2 of the plan. Interventions may be tailored to meet the specific needs of each student group based on incoming data.

As previously noted, quantitative assessment data from the 2020-21 WYTOPP is currently being evaluated and analyzed for various trends and includes a review of participation rates, achievement rates, and potential gaps between student subgroups in comparison to the rates for all students. On September 1, 2021 data will be released addressing proficiency rates in the content areas of Math, English Language Arts, and Science as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Data for the following student groups will be included: All students, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, white, Two or More Races, Female, male, English Language Learner, Non-English Language Learner, Free/Reduced Lunch, Non-Free/Reduced Lunch, Individual Education Program, Gifted/Talented, Non-Gifted Talented, Migrant, Non-Migrant, Homeless, Non-Homeless, Virtual Education, Non-Virtual Education, Military Connected, Non-Military Connected, Foster Care, and Non-Foster Care. The WDE will also analyze Graduation Rates and WIDA ACCESS Assessment data for changes in historical trends potentially indicative of negative impacts due to COVID-19.

Recognizing the need for additional data from students specific to their learning experience this past year, the WDE included a student survey during WYTOPP assessment this past spring that will further inform student group needs. We are eager to have verified data, but at this time, it appears that more than 95% of students were assessed on all assessments. This included solid representative samples of student subgroups, which Wyoming identified as crucial to have comparative data to make accurate claims and plans. This was a discussion point during the WY-TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) meeting in November 2020.

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[1] 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.

Assessment and survey data by student groups will be added to Wyoming's ARP ESSER state plan when available.

At this point, anecdotal information guides the WDE in recognizing increased need for the following student groups:

Native Learners
- COVID has devastated the impoverished native communities served by Fremont County School Districts with students experiencing even larger gaps in their reading, language use, and math skills.
- Nearly all Native Learners come from a single caregiver home and experience the effects of poverty.
- The Wind River Reservation had the highest mortality rate in the State due to COVID indicating extensive trauma through the loss of family members.
- Many homes on the Wind River Reservation lacked adequate internet connectivity and access to technically adequate devices in sufficient numbers to allow for meaningful engagement during the extended Stay at Home Tribal orders preventing students from attending school in person through February 2021. Education engagement was at an all-time low.
- It is reported that there is a marked increase in drug related crime and domestic abuse.
- Native families are coping with many elevated at-risk markers such as grief, fear, and food insecurities.
- All reported by Fremont County School District superintendents, and Wyoming Department of Health COVID-19 Impact Data.

Special Education Students
- Educators report higher levels of disengagement in virtual education for students with disabilities.
- Educators report greater difficulties in supporting students on IEPs with behavioral issues or needed support.
- Many students with disabilities experienced adjustments by IEP teams to IEP services due to health concerns.
- The challenges of providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions has been exacerbated by COVID-19 health protocols.

The WDE continues to collect stakeholder feedback to better understand the current needs of specific student populations.

Table A1.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	
Students from each racial or ethnic background used by the State for reporting purposes – please add a row for each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	
Students by gender – please add a row for each 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	
Migratory students	
Other groups of students identified by the State (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, LGBTQ+ students)	

4. <u>Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic</u>: 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.

Response:
The WDE will continue to support LEAs in identifying the extent of COVID-19 pandemic impact on student learning, with a focus on student groups that have been most negatively impacted. This support comes primarily through the provision of various data sources and technical assistance in learning to interpret and act upon the information.

- WYTOPP interim and summative data provide LEAs with extensive and critical information for all student groups from which to identify academic gaps potentially resulting from the effects of COVID-19.
- The WDE offered financial support through ESSER I funds for access to the FastBridge screening and monitoring tool and district personnel training for effective implementation and use. This evidence-based, school psychologist developed instrument addresses the key areas of reading, math, and behavior.
- Wyoming LEAs receive data from Safe2tell, a confidential hotline for reporting student in crisis for suicide threats, other self-harm, alcohol and drug use, and bullying. Wyoming's commitment to creating safe schools stems back to the 2016 passage of SF-0097. Participating LEAs have longitudinal data and can track trends to further determine an increase in crisis. Using data LEAs can target specific school communities, age, or student subgroups most in need.
- The WDE Statewide System of Support and Special Education Programs Division offers LEA Data Drill Down professional development. This robust training builds skill in district personnel to interpret and make actionable plans to improve student success.

- The WDE recently launched [WYOMING MTSS](#). Embedded in the multi-tiered system of support framework is the development of a deep understanding of universal screening, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. The WDE makes available training that supports the continuous improvement cycle at the classroom, building, and district levels.
- With the use of ESSER II state-level funds, the WDE's Standards and Assessment Division released an RFP to contract services for a Wyoming Assessment Data Analyst (WADA) to analyze and interpret state assessment data for pre and post pandemic trends, make assessment data accessible to all Wyoming stakeholders, and through training opportunities support LEAs in the use of data interpretation to drive school improvement efforts. A second component to the recently released RFP is for a district Professional Development Provider (PDP). The PDP will assist districts in using the analysis from the WADA in conjunction with local district assessment data (LEA generated formative and course summative assessment, screening data, climate survey results, etc).

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;

Response:
For the 2020-21 school year, the WDE collected district operational status. LEAs reported reopening status and the WDE tracked current status as notified of change by districts. LEAs reported status as Tier I, primarily in-person classes with implementation of social distancing and the use of face coverings; Tier II, a hybrid delivery of in-person and adapted learning instruction required due to local or state health directives; or Tier III, school buildings closed to students due to local or state health directives or orders, districts implementing spring 2020 approved adapted learning plans.

At the onset of the 2020-21 school year, 43 of Wyoming's 48 school districts opened in Tier 1, two in Tier II, and three of the Wind River Reservation districts in Tier 3. The school year ended with 44 districts operating in Tier 1, and four operating in Tier II.

The WDE plans to continue monitoring operating status during the upcoming school year. Districts will be providing an amended Smart Start plan to include ARP ESSER LEA requirements and will identify opening operational status. The WDE will provide a survey at mid-year and school-year end to ensure accurate documentation of operational status across the state.

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

Response:
October 2020 total enrollment, disaggregated by various student groups, has been provided in Table 2 of Appendix A. Historical enrollment by mode of instruction is not available at this time. The WDE will begin collecting student level mode of instruction for the 2021-22 school year and beyond. The first reporting period will be October 2021, with additional data collected in March 2022 and at the end of the 2021-22 school year.

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.

Response:
Wyoming's aggregate attendance and membership data reporting requirements can be found in WS 21-13-101(a)(i) and agency rules Chapter 8, Section 8. The WDE does not currently collect attendance data in sufficient detail for determining impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no intention to change the current aggregated attendance data collection as that would require legislative action. Attendance and Membership requirements can be found in agency rules Chapter 8, Section 8 https://edu.wyoming.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Chapter-8-School-Finance-1.pdf or WS 21-13-101(a)(i).

ii. The data described in A.5.i.a. and b. using the template in Appendix A (and to the extent available, the data 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.

Response:
Data described in A.5.i.a. and b., to the extent available, has been provided in the two templates in Appendix A. Public reporting of the available data can be accessed on WDE's website COVID-19 Resources page at https://edu.wyoming.gov/home/covid-19-resources/.
As detailed in Appendix C of the USED provided ARP plan template, also available on the COVID-19 Resources page are links to Wyoming's ARP ESSER State Plan and URLs to LEA websites where the public can access Smart Start Plans meeting the requirements for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, and plan details for use of ARP ESSER funds.

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.

Response:
In-person instruction is expected to be available to all Wyoming students for Summer 2021 and for the 2021-22 school year. Full-time virtual education programs will continue to be available as an option for all Wyoming students for the 2021-22 school year.

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. <u>Support for LEAs</u>: 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.

Response:

The WDE supported LEAs through the development of a Smart Start Guidance document for the reopening of schools during the 2020-21 academic year. The Smart Start Taskforce facilitated a series of meetings during May and June 2020 to consider research, utilize CDC Guidance and state/local health requirements in the development of a practical guidance tool that would assist school districts in reopening in the fall of 2020. This guidance document included assurances, definitions and the components (communication, safety and wellness, school operations measures, and instruction and technology) that would support the needs of students and staff across the academic setting. Within each section of the guidance document, resources were provided that aligned to requirements, recommendations and/or considerations depending on the tier of operation. An appendix provided additional information on daily screening protocols and communication.

For example, during the 2020-21 academic year, the Safety and Wellness guidance within Smart Start focuses on components within a school day, beginning with the arrival and transitions, and finally dismissal. The format of the guidance provides information on requirements, recommendations and consideration regarding the safety, health, and wellness of students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Provided is one sample of guidance.

Requirements for student arrival to building and through the day:
- Develop a plan for student arrival to the building.
- Develop a plan for entrance to the building whether limiting the number of entrances open or requiring specific groups to use specific entrances.
- Parents should screen their children daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending them to school.

- Emphasize the importance of staying home when ill.
- Any student reporting an illness will be sent home. Symptomatic students who are awaiting pickup by a parent or guardian will wear a mask even if separation from healthy students is feasible.
- Staff will be instructed to remain home if any symptoms are present. Staff who might develop symptoms at work should have access to masks as they leave the building.

Recommendations for student arrival to the building and through the day:
- Nurses Offices are separated into areas for healthy and ill students.
- Hand-washing upon entrance to the building if feasible. Hand sanitizer available at all building entrances and in classrooms.
- Make masks available in classrooms for students who report symptoms while transitioning to school health services.
- Any student with reported symptoms will follow CDC and state or local health department guidelines for return to school/work.
- Develop a plan for consistent seating arrangements and/or plans to limit the number of close contacts per student.
- PPE will be provided, as possible, to school nurses and school staff working with potentially ill students.
- Develop a plan for potential barrier devices in the front office and the cafeteria.

Considerations for students' arrival to the building and through the day:
- Separation recommendations could range from partitions, separate rooms, mobile units, etc.
- PPE Option 1: School districts can obtain PPE from local or other vendors through district procurement practices. Once a school district sets up an account with Amazon, the school district will have the ability to purchase PPE through Amazon and the supplies will be directly shipped to the school districts. This provides school districts the flexibility and the ability to obtain PPE and other supplies directly. Additionally, school districts have the ability to obtain these supplies as needed throughout the year. Districts will need to provide their own form of payment.
- PPE Option 2: Communicate with the Wyoming Department of Homeland Security regarding the need for PPE.
- PPE Option 3: School districts can obtain PPE from local or other vendors through district procurement.

The School Operations guidance within Smart Start for the 2020-21 academic year focuses on components within a school day such as transportation, nutrition services, facilities and activities. The format of the guidance provides information on requirements, recommendations and considerations regarding the school operations impacting students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Provided is one sample of guidance.

Requirements:

- Each school district will operate all facilities in a way that maximizes social distancing, use of face coverings, and appropriate hygiene measures. When social distancing is not possible, staff and students should wear face coverings to the greatest extent possible.
- Cleaning and sanitation protocols will meet or exceed federal and state guidance.
- Students and parents will be informed of requirements and protocols, and signage will be displayed when and where appropriate as reminders.
- Parents should screen their children daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending them to school.

Recommendations:
- Limit access to buildings to employees and students.
- Face coverings are recommended at all times but are most important when people cannot be six feet apart or when there is mixing of classrooms.
- Develop and deploy protocols to ensure social distancing as much as possible, not only in classrooms, but in hallways, for entrance and dismissal, and during any movement of students inside the school.
- Place desks six feet apart if possible. If not possible, develop seating arrangements to maximize safety precautions.
- Develop protocols for cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, any shared items, and in between groups of students.
- Provide training to custodial and maintenance staff pertinent to the changes in their duties (for example, enhanced sanitation measures, approved chemicals).

Considerations:
- Should groups of students and their teachers use different entrances?
- Not having all students on campus at one time (rotating, blended, hybrid models).
- Districts should discuss / determine methods for sanitizing cafeteria, libraries, gyms, playgrounds between groups.
- Consider limiting or prohibiting visitors to buildings.
- Consider protocol for screening visitors, if visitors are permitted.

See Smart Start Guidance document for full details.

Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	*• Each school district will operate all facilities in a way that maximizes social distancing, use of face coverings, and appropriate hygiene measures. When social distancing is not possible, staff*

	and students should wear face coverings to the greatest extent possible.
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	*• Each school district will operate all facilities in a way that maximizes social distancing, use of face coverings, and appropriate hygiene measures. When social distancing is not possible, staff and students should wear face coverings to the greatest extent possible.*
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	*• Adhere to local health department requirements regarding health and safety protocols, regarding hand washing/hand sanitizer, cleansing equipment, social distancing, etc.*
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	*• Cleaning and sanitation protocols will meet or exceed federal and state guidance.*
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	*• The WDE does not have requirements for contact tracing and recommends our LEAs follow state and local recommendations.*
Diagnostic and screening testing	*• Parents should screen their children daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending their children to school.* *• Emphasize the importance of staying home when ill.* *• Any student reporting an illness will be sent home. Symptomatic students who are awaiting pickup by a parent or guardian will wear a mask even if separation from healthy students is feasible.*

	• *Staff will be instructed to remain home if any symptoms are present. Staff who might develop symptoms at work should have access to masks as they leave the building.*
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	• *The WDE is not involved in the effort to provide vaccinations.*
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	• *Adherence to IDEA and individualizing to the specific needs of students with disabilities, with special consideration given to medical needs potentially increasing health risk, should be the decision of the full IEP team.*

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;

Response:

During the 2020-21 academic year, the SEA required LEAs to follow assurances within the Smart Start Guidance to develop a plan for school reopening and continued operation considering these potential scenarios:

- Tier I (Open): In-person classes and activities, as appropriate. Minimal adapted learning on a limited, as-needed basis. Most students in school at the same time under the provisions of current health orders. Social distancing and face coverings to the greatest extent possible. Buildings open to all students.
- Tier II (Hybrid): Combination of in-person and adapted learning is required due to local or state health directives. Social distancing and face coverings to the greatest extent possible for those attending in person. Buildings open to some students.
- Tier III (Closed): School buildings closed to students due to local or state health directives or orders. School districts will follow provisions in the approved adapted learning plan. Buildings not open to students.
- In addition, LEAs were required to follow the assurances with the Smart Start Guidance provided in terms of communication, safety and wellness, school operations and instruction and technology.
- The estimated timelines for reopening and operation of school facilities were outlined in the Smart Start Guidance. All LEA Smart Start Plans were due to the SEA by August 3, 2020. All LEA plans were reviewed by SEA staff and follow up feedback and/or approval

was provided within a weekly window. LEAs were required to provide the SEA with information related to any changes and a tracking document outlined the status of districts.

      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

Response:
The WDE and Wyoming's LEAs have had consistent and ongoing consultation with the WDH to ensure the most up-to-date information in decision making. Throughout the spring of 2020 the WDE and LEAs were in close contact with state health officials to determine appropriate circumstances for school closures. As detailed throughout the explanation of the Smart Start guidance, in preparing to reopen for the 2020-21 school year and to remain open, LEAs conformed to state health orders in consultation with local county health offices. Any variances from state health orders were required to be submitted, reviewed and approved at the local health office level.

Wyoming is receiving $17,431,937 in funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant. This screening testing support available to LEAs through WDH was announced by the WDE April 16th at the annual superintendent's spring conference. Email follow up was sent to each district superintendent on April 19th that included a link to a WDH survey, School COVID-19 Testing, aimed at collecting information about then current screening practices, to determine level of interest in participating in future school-based screening efforts, and to determine LEA resource needs to implement school-based screening efforts.

The WDH received a 42% response rate from districts in regards to the survey. Of the responding districts, 55% indicated that they offer COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic staff; 35% offer COVID-19 testing of symptomatic staff; 10% offer COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic students; and 15% offer COVID-19 of symptomatic students. These same responding districts indicated that for this summer, 40% will not offer screening opportunities, 30% will, 20% are undecided, and 10% are seeking more information from the WDH. For the upcoming 2021-22 school year, 60% are undecided about offering COVID-19 testing, 25% have decided not to offer the screening testing, and 15% are interested in additional information to implement or expand current screening testing efforts.

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

Response:
The WDE will continue to support LEAs in having the most up-to-date health and virus mitigation information from which to operate. Superintendent COVID-19 Response meetings will be held as necessary in collaboration with WDH, and Smart Start Plan guidance will be updated as necessary through the use of the Smart Start Taskforce. Additionally, the WDE provided funding through ESSER I SEA Reserve funds for the annual Wyoming Custodians Conference to ensure TA and PD for best facilities cleaning practices. With the use of ESSER II SEA Reserve funds and ARP ESSER SEA Reserve funds, the WDE has supported funding a State Nurse position to provide guidance and assistance to LEAs on policy and implementation of

state and local health orders.

2. <u>Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans</u>: 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),[2] 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.

Response:

The WDE will require that each LEA submit its Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans within 60 days of making the ARP LEA ESSER applications available in the state's grant management system (GMS). This will be accomplished through the LEA revision of its 2020-21 Smart Start Plan allowing for all components to be contained in one plan. To ensure that each plan has been updated to meet the minimum statutory requirements, the WDE has provided an ARP ESSER guidance document that includes a detailed checklist of

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[2] 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.

all necessary components. The LEA application in the GMS also details the list of required elements and an assurance of compliance from each LEA. LEA Smart Start Plans for the 2020-21 school year required compliance with state and local health and safety standards for Tier I and II operating status. This continues to be a requirement in the revision to the plan.

As of this writing, a Superintendent COVID-19 Response meeting is scheduled to present all districts with the updated information and timelines. LEAs will be required to submit a copy of the revised Smart Start Plan for the 2021-22 school year and to post such plans on its website for the duration of the ARP ESSER funding. The WDE will require that LEAs submit and repost to their websites any revision of the 2021-22 school year Smart Start plan at a minimum of every six months.

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. <u>SEA Consultation</u>: 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.

Response:
Wyoming's draft ARP ESSER State Plan is a reflection of stakeholder input since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This spring the WDE held Topic Specific Stakeholder Group discussions, solicited input during ongoing Superintendent COVID-19 Response meetings, provided multiple surveys, and Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jillian Balow, hosted a recent series of in-person town-hall style meetings across the state with educators, students, and family members.

Collection of stakeholder input is ongoing in response to Wyoming's draft ARP State Plan posted on the WDE website. Additionally, targeted discussions are scheduled with attention to the stakeholder group or topic. The WDE recognizes the ongoing changing environment resulting in the dynamic nature of the ARP ESSER State Plan and anticipates the need to make changes, including with the receipt of ongoing stakeholder input.

2. <u>Coordinating Funds</u>: 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)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)

ESSER I (CARES Act)	**State Total Allocation** $32,562,651
	
	LEA Subaward Total $29,306,386
	-90% of state total allocation
	-Based on Title I, Part A calculations
	
	SEA Reserve Total $3,093,452
	-Administration $162,813
	-SEA Reserve $3,093,452
	  ● Educator professional development addressing educator knowledge base and skill set in literacy development $809,835
	  ● K-12 support for screening and progress monitoring of reading, math, and behavior $441,492
	  ● Professional development for statewide custodians conference to train on best practices to mitigate virus spread $64,068
		All SEA funds, with the exception of administrative funds, have been awarded.
		
		The WDE does not collect information from LEAs for planned uses outside of the initial budget submitted for grant application. These categories are broad.
		
		Most common reported uses include:
		  ● Summer school employee salary and benefits
		  ● Additional Janitorial and School Nutrition Staff
		  ● Substitute Teacher costs
		  ● Health care support devices (thermometers, automatic sanitizer dispensers)

	● Competitive Awards to LEAs to address learning loss $1,760,684	
GEER I (CARES Act)	Through Governor Mark Gordon's office, LEAs were provided formulaic grants with a $5000 base and increased for average student daily membership. All of Wyoming's LEAs received a grant. The Governor's Office, in consultation with an educator task force, determined a focus of these funds on addressing technology needs during remote learning, and on improving the outcomes of the various transitions students experience (grade to grade, from one instructional mode to another). Total allocated to K-12 LEAs $803,305	All GEER funds requested for SEA support in allocation have been awarded. The WDE does not collect information from LEAs for planned uses outside of the initial budget submitted for grant application. These categories are broad. Most common reported uses include: ● increasing broadband availability to students ● provision of devices for students ● increased technology for classroom allowing for virtual presentation and participation
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	**State Total Allocation** $135,230,900 **LEA Subaward Total** $121,707,810 -90% of state total allocation -Based on Title I, Part A calculations **SEA Reserve Total** $13,523,090 -Administration $676,155 -SEA Reserve $12,846,935 ● State Nurse $137,000 ● Improving virtual education $400,000 ● Innovations Grant $1,000,000 ● CTE Demo Grants $500,000	The WDE does not collect information from LEAs for planned uses outside of the initial budget submitted for grant application. These categories are broad. These funds were just recently made available to LEAs and as such there is little to report. Current Remaining SEA Reserve to allocate/award (less administrative funds) plans: ● Data support $625,000 ● Data LEA DPD $500,000 ● Curriculum Training and Clearinghouse Project $2,000,000 ● Assessment --ACT $4,900 ● SEL Package $4,000,000 ● Student Transition (FAFSA) $200,000
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	There have been no GEER II funds awarded to K-12 at the time of this writing.	There have been no GEER II funds awarded to K-12 at the time of this writing.

     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.

Response:

The WDE has awarded the required 90% of ESSER I and ESSER II funds to LEAs. The WDE does not have the ability to track LEA obligations. Grant status as of May 31, 2021 can best be summarized in the table below.

Funding source	Total Award	Amount Reimbursed	% of Total Award Reimbursed
ESSER I (CARES Act) LEA Allocations	$29,306,385.90	$18,804,723.76	64.17%
GEER I (CARES Act) LEA Allocations	$803,305.30	$307,358.52	46.10%
ESSER II (CRRSA Act) LEA Allocations	$121,624,733.83	$83,076.17	.07%
	Reserve Total less Administrative Allowance	Amount Awarded	% of Total SEA Reserve Awarded
ESSER I (CARES Act) SEA Reserve	$3,093,452.10	$3,093,452.10	100%
ESSER II (CRRSA Act) SEA Reserve	$12,846,935	$648,941	5.05%

    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.[3]

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[3] 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.

Response:

The WDE has been coordinating SEA level ESEA funds to provide specific professional development to support unique situations or populations during this pandemic, such as English Learners, digital learning, and Title I schools/students. Professional Development includes or will include once delivered, the following Professional Development:

- A series of professional development to address English Learners' learning loss.
- An overview of a framework that plays a role in supporting English Learner Students with suspected learning disabilities in both virtual and site-based settings.
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Title I schools to assist with identifying learning gaps.
- Support for the implementation of the International Society of Technology Educators Standards for Students and the Digital Learning Guidelines as indicated in the state's Digital Learning Plan. While started before the pandemic, the need for consistent and quality digital learning has only increased due to the pandemic making this opportunity more critical.
- Instructure (the maker of Canvas) is contracted to provide an adoption consultant who supports WDE and LEAs in the statewide use of Canvas, assists in online course development, and builds capacity of LEAs to work in/with Canvas. Canvas has been a major tool used during the pandemic for both virtual and hybrid learning.
- TeachUNITED provides training for teacher leaders throughout the school year to participate in a train-the-trainer professional development focused on teaching in online and hybrid classrooms.

Additionally, the WDE has been providing technical assistance and pilot programs using ESEA funds around a new School Improvement Plan process, and strengthening the Multi-Tiered System of Support across our state. WDE Program Managers have also begun traveling again to support consolidated grant planning efforts for the 2021-22 school year, and provide ongoing technical assistance to meet federal requirements during this unique time in education.

To address the needs of students with disabilities, the WDE has provided grants from IDEA Part B 611 and 619 state set aside funds to LEAs specifically to improve student outcomes. The WDE has disseminated IDEA guidance documents to address the needs of students that have arisen due to the pandemic. In addition the special education programs division has offered 32 virtual free professional development opportunities to LEAs. Many of these sessions addressed IDEA compliance topics and best practices to assist educators in adjusting to hybrid and virtual teaching environments. Sessions and guidance were also shared regarding meeting additional social and emotional needs due to the pandemic and the isolation that many families experienced.

In order to address the requirements of students needing and/or desiring to enter the workforce and/or to receive pre-employment transition services, the WDE Career and Technical Education (CTE) team works with the WDE Special Education team, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Wyoming Independent Living, and the Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. In addition, the WDE CTE meets monthly with state agencies and private service providers known as the Wyoming Transition Team to coordinate the services provided and to ensure LEA staff have the knowledge and information to provide a seamless process for student referrals to the services and support afforded to them through WIOA. The Wyoming Transition Team was formed after participation in National Technical Assistance Training in Transition (NTACT) training in 2019-2020. A second cohort is participating in 2021-22.

The WDE Nutrition Program is working with community partners including the Wyoming Hunger Initiative, No Kid Hungry, the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Food Bank of the Rockies and the Wyoming Local Foods Coalition to meet the needs of Wyoming children and families that are nutritionally at risk.

Wyoming was the only state to have all of the districts that were on the National School Lunch Program choose to feed the kids in their communities when schools were closed due to COVID-19.

- The Wyoming Department of Family Services is the lead agency for Pandemic Electronic Funds Transfer (P-EBT). The WDE is assisting them in the effort to serve families in need. LEAs have been asked to provide data on the type of learning model, school start date, school closure, children that qualify for Free and Reduced meals through applications or are directly certified for free meals through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Foster, Homeless, Migrant or runaway to help determine student benefits for P-EBT. This information is then passed onto the Wyoming Department of Family Services to disperse the benefit https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-guidancecoronavirus-pandemic-ebt-pebt
- The Wyoming Child Nutrition Emergency Cost Reimbursement Plan is currently waiting on approval from the USDA Mountain Plains Regional Office (MPRO). These funds are determined by meals lost due to COVID 19 during the months of March 2020 through June 2020. https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/emergency-operating-costs-during-covid-19-implementation-guidance
- The WDE Child Nutrition Team meets with Food Service Directors and Business Managers from LEAs through virtual weekly meetings; created an FAQ document that is updated after each meeting and emailed to all LEAs, sends COVID-19 emails with USDA waivers and latest updates as information is received; provides ongoing technical assistance as needed on all aspects of the program both in person and virtually. The Wyoming School Nutrition Association is planning to hold their annual summer conference in person in June providing safe networking and classes to increase knowledge of the program and to recognize the heroic work that was done by Wyoming school food service workers during the past two years.

The WDE has and will continue to provide support and training to LEA Homeless Liaisons throughout the pandemic to assist in identifying students experiencing homelessness and addressing the unique needs of these students. The WDE leads and facilitates monthly Zoom meetings with liaisons to support collaboration on new ways to identify students, and share different ways districts have met the needs of these students during this challenging time. These meetings have been very beneficial as Wyoming has many rural school districts and LEA's have had to be strategic on how to address the needs of homeless students.

- The WDE established connections with Medicaid, Magellan Healthcare, HUD, Headstart and TRiO Educational Opportunity Centers to be able to gather and disseminate information to LEAs to support students experiencing homelessness. The WDE will also coordinate opportunities for Q&A between LEAs and each of these entities leading into the 2021-22 school year.
- The WDE will also be providing support training and other opportunities for collaboration with local and state entities that support students experiencing homelessness at a conference in June of 2021. The WDE is bringing together a team that includes the WDE State Homeless Coordinator, District Homeless Liaisons and a representative from Headstart to attend the Education Leads Home Conference in March of 2022.

- The WDE will continue to establish communication between other agencies that support families and students experiencing homelessness, and will continue to organize and provide training and support to LEA's to address the needs of these students.

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;

   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

   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.

Response:
Funds reserved 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) identified to address the impact of lost instruction time through the use of evidence-based intervention will be used in several ways. Funds will be awarded through the implementation of an LEA grant opportunity titled Addressing Gaps and Accelerated Learning." The WDE has not chosen specific evidence-based interventions, allowing for LEAs to select appropriate evidence-based interventions tailored to students' needs, and have instead identified various areas of focus that include:

- Kindergarten Readiness - provider professional development and training, assessment tools, curriculum, materials and supplies.
- Innovations and Targeted Learning - programs and interventions that specifically address identified gaps or needs in student learning (including family engagement, summer learning and enrichment partnerships, extended day, comprehensive afterschool program partnerships, extended year programs).
- Computer Science Reboot - LEA and Post-Secondary Partnerships.
- Tribal or Wind River Reservation LEA partnerships.
- Post-Secondary Transition Support Activities.
- Content specific PD to follow Curriculum Clearinghouse and Topic Training Series.

The WDE will require LEAs to use evidence-based strategies to address the impact of lost instruction time by selecting activities and interventions meeting one of the tiers of evidence as defined in section 8101(21) of the ESEA:

- Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on:
  - Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study ("tier 1");
  - Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study ("tier 2"); or
  - Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias ("tier 3"); or
  - Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention ("tier 4").

The WDE will require, as part of the grant award, identification of monitoring practices for planned implementation by LEAs. This will determine the effectiveness of the program/intervention; explanation of how the evidence-based interventions will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the student group, including students with high levels of absenteeism or disengagement; and include data sources used to determine the impact of lost instructional time on any specific student group and current student group needs.

The WDE will support the ongoing collection and analysis of data through the state's WY-TOPP interim and summative assessments, submission of DLP data, and through the work of the WDE's WADA and PDP in conjunction with LEAs local data.

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;

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

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.
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Response:
The WDE will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act *in conjunction with* the 1% set-aside under section 2001(f)(3), <u>each</u> totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds, to provide LEAs and community-based organizations in strategic partnerships with grants to implement or expand evidence-based, comprehensive expanded learning programs with the following components:
1) A summer learning and enrichment program.
2) An afterschool program during the school year that may include before school, vacations, and any time students are not in school.

Based upon the evidence-based practices that are required for Wyoming's 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, programs will be designed intentionally with alignment to the school day instructional program in order to address interrupted learning opportunities caused by circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also incorporating youth voice, choice, and leadership opportunities with active and meaningful family engagement practices.

Combining the two set-asides into one grant will encourage continuity and year round access to high-quality programs that a) target equitable access, including transportation, b) are designed with SMART goals at the activity level to ensure students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs will be met, and c) will facilitate collaboration between LEAs, community-based organizations, and stakeholders. As part of intentional design, the WDE will require:
- An explanation or logic model of how the evidence-based interventions chosen by the subgrantee will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on specific student subgroups, including students with high levels of absenteeism or disengagement.
- Specific qualitative and quantitative data sources for measurable outcomes that can be disaggregated to determine impact on specific populations.
- A progress monitoring timeline to generate ongoing feedback on program/intervention effectiveness.

The WDE is purposeful in not choosing or requiring specific evidence-based interventions for all subgrantees. The LEAs and community-based youth-serving organizations, in partnership with

each other and through meaningful engagement with families, are best positioned to use local data and an awareness of the local context to select evidence-based interventions tailored to students' needs and the overall priorities set by WDE for ARP ESSER III funds mentioned in Section A (2). The WDE will require that subgrantees use evidence-based strategies and practices in implementing summer learning and enrichment and afterschool programs that meet one of the tiers of evidence as defined in section 8101(21) of the ESEA:

- Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on:
  - Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study ("tier 1");
  - Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study ("tier 2"); or
  - Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias ("tier 3"); or
  - Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention ("tier 4").

The WDE will support the ongoing collection and analysis of data through the state's WY-TOPP interim and summative assessments, submission of the District Literacy Plan data, local program evaluation, and through the work of the WDE's WADA and PDP in conjunction with LEAs local data.

3. <u>Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs</u>: 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:

iv. 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;

v. 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

vi. 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

<div align="center">who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.</div>

Response:

The WDE will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act *in conjunction with* the 1% set-aside under section 2001(f)(2), <u>each</u> totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds, to provide LEAs and community-based organizations in strategic partnerships with grants to implement or expand evidence-based, comprehensive expanded learning programs with the following components:

1) A summer learning and enrichment program.
2) An afterschool program during the school year that may include before school, vacations, and any time students are not in school.

Based upon the evidence-based practices that are required for Wyoming's 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, programs will be designed intentionally with alignment to the school day instructional program in order to address interrupted learning opportunities caused by circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic while also incorporating youth voice, choice, and leadership opportunities with active and meaningful family engagement practices.

Combining the two set-asides into one grant will encourage continuity and year round access to high-quality programs that a) target equitable access, including transportation, b) are designed with SMART goals at the activity level to ensure students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs will be met, and c) will facilitate collaboration between LEAs, community-based organizations, and stakeholders. As part of intentional design, the WDE will require:

● An explanation or logic model of how the evidence-based interventions chosen by the subgrantee will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on students and specific student subgroups, including students with high levels of absenteeism or disengagement.
● Specific qualitative and quantitative data sources for measurable outcomes that can be disaggregated to determine impact on specific populations.
● A progress monitoring timeline to generate ongoing feedback on program/intervention effectiveness.

The WDE is purposeful in not choosing or requiring specific evidence-based interventions for all subgrantees. The LEAs and community-based youth-serving organizations, in partnership with each other and through meaningful engagement with families, are best positioned to use local data and an awareness of the local context to select evidence-based interventions tailored to students' needs and the overall priorities set by WDE for ARP ESSER III funds mentioned in Section A (2). The WDE will require that subgrantees use evidence-based strategies and practices in implementing summer learning and enrichment and afterschool programs that meet one of the tiers of evidence as defined in section 8101(21) of the ESEA:

● Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—
  ○ Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study ("tier 1");
  ○ Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study ("tier 2"); or
  ○ Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias ("tier 3"); or

○ Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention ("tier 4").

The WDE will support the ongoing collection and analysis of data through the state's WY-TOPP interim and summative assessments, submission of the District Literacy Plan data, local program evaluation, and through the work of the WDE's WADA and PDP in conjunction with LEAs local data.

4. 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.

Response:
The WDE has not determined the use of the remaining SEA Reserve funds identified to be used for emergency needs. These determinations will be made upon a review of stakeholder input received from upcoming scheduled stakeholder meetings and future survey results.

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.

Response:
The WDE will require that within 60 days of making the ARP ESSER funds available to LEAs, each will submit its revised Smart Start Plan, meeting the requirements of section E.1.i. The LEA ARP funds application, available in the GMS, will require information addressing all components of sections E.1 and E.2. LEAs will be provided with a comprehensive checklist of requirements to assist in ensuring all requirements are met.

> 2. <u>LEA Consultation</u>: 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.

Response:
See response to section E.1.

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;

   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

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

Response:
The WDE will support and monitor LEA's use of the ARP ESSER funds in the following ways:

● The WDE will provide guidance and assistance to school districts on all aspects of plan requirements.
● LEA's will submit a narrative and a provisional timeline (including program, timeframe, and estimated budget) in the state's GMS that will detail how the LEAs will address learning loss and accelerated learning through evidence-based interventions, as well as how the LEA will support those students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as detailed and defined by statute. The WDE will require districts to adhere to all required assurances associated with the receipt of ARP ESSER funds. Grant applications will be reviewed and receive full approval or returned for additional information regarding compliance prior to receiving full approval.
● The WDE will develop and implement a desk monitoring tool to be used with the oversight of ARP ESSER funds. This monitoring tool will include a review of LEA's implementation and use of funds in relation to items E.3.i-iii.
● Annual state assessment and local measures will be reported to demonstrate outcomes.

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.

Response:
The WDE has and will continue to provide LEAs with TA for developing and implementing comprehensive local needs assessments, as required by other title programs. Part of this TA will be the support of bringing various required separate needs assessments together to address the entire system and allowing LEAs to target areas of greatest need, including those supporting equity. As districts are required to share this information through the LEA ARP ESSER application, the WDE will, through review of all 48 applications, identify areas of greatest need for targeted state-wide technical assistance and professional development.

The majority of Wyoming districts returned to in-person instruction in the fall of 2020. The few districts that were unable to do so were those located on Wyoming's Wind River Reservation and under Tribal orders preventing the return to in-person instruction until February 2021. The WDE will include a requirement for LEAs to include information addressing the ability to sustain equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction to their revised Smart Start Plans.

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.

Response:
Teacher shortage areas reported to USED for the 2019-20 school year outline statewide teacher shortage areas as a reflection of FTEs and as a percentage of total statewide FTE positions. Overall, Wyoming does not have a significant teacher shortage as demonstrated by the overall 1.69%. We typically consider 5% the marker of official shortage. Specific areas, however, indicated some significant change. Vocational Education, Study Skills/Study Hall, English Learner Education, and Middle Grades Science, with Special Education close behind, were the primary areas of shortage for 19-20.

Table F1.

Area	FTE	Percentage of FTE
Vocational Education	16.66	7.62%
Study Skills/Study Hall	1.03	6.32%
English Learner Education	4.00	6.02%
Middle Grades Science	3.83	5.04%
Special Education	46.09	4.57%
Mathematics	13.68	2.95%
Title I Reading	1.00	2.89%
Geography	0.83	2.71%
Physical Science	1.72	2.68%
English (including Middle Language Arts)	8.5	1.82%
Spanish	2.00	1.79%
Chemistry	0.77	1.71%
Music	3.47	1.45%
Earth and Space Science	0.83	1.40%
Physics	0.17	1.19%
Art	1.43	0.61%
Elementary Grades (Core Academic Subjects)	15.00	0.56%
US History	1.17	0.53%
Biology and Life Sciences	0.67	0.43%
Physical Education	1.00	0.26%

- Total of all FTE teaching positions for the state is 7,318.
- Total FTE positions working under Exception Authorizations is 123.84 or 1.69%.
- Teacher FTE increased from 7,228.50 in 2018-19 to 7,318 in 2019-20.
- Exception Authorizations FTE increased from 91.64 in 2018-19 to 123.84 in 2019-20.
- Career and Technical Education Exception Authorizations (EAs) increased from 8.36 FTE in 2018-19 to 16.66 FTE in 2019-20, which translates to a 3.07% increase. This alarming trend is indicative of our aging CTE educator workforce and a lack of replacements.
- The amount of Special Education teachers working on EAs increased only slightly (0.02%).

With the pandemic and economic factors impacting district funding, retirements for some teachers may have been accelerated (happening sooner than originally anticipated), creating potential for teacher shortages for school years 2020-21 and 2021-22 in some areas. To address these, and previous issues with licensure for the 2020-21 school year due to COVID-19 effects (closing testing sites, slowing background checks, etc.), through the PTSB, Wyoming provided additional licensure flexibility while continuing to ensure students' access to high quality teachers.

Current routes to licensure include:

- Standard Route: A candidate completes a traditional teacher preparation program that leads to licensure in that state and includes a practicum. The college/university can sign off on an Institutional Recommendation stating the individual met all program requirements.
- EAs/Alternative Routes: These routes or 'exceptions' are designed for individuals that do not meet all the requirements for a standard license but can be placed on an EA as a provisional license until meeting all requirements.
    - EA Option #1 - This is available to Elementary Education and Social Studies Comprehensive applicants only. It is explicitly designed to allow the applicant additional time to complete the Praxis II testing required to obtain a Wyoming Standard Educator License. This EA is valid for one year and is not renewable.
    - EA Option #2 - This is available for individuals who have been assigned to teach in a content area in which they do not meet the requirements for full licensure/endorsement. This EA is valid for one year but is renewable for up to three years allowing time for the individual to complete required coursework within the three year timeframe to become eligible for ongoing licensure.
    - EA Option #3 - This is available to applicants hired by a Wyoming school district as an Administrator, School Counselor, School Social Worker, School Psychologist, or any other related service positions who do not hold full licensure in the area employed. This EA is valid for one year and is not renewable.
    - EA Option #4 Out-of-field Endorsement (By District Request Only) - The Out-of-Field endorsement allows a currently licensed individual to be assigned to teach in a content area they do not now hold an endorsement in for a limited period of time. During that time, if they pass the Praxis or OPIexam in the new content area, the individual could add the endorsement to their existing license. A formal written explanation from the district superintendent of the circumstances must be included with the application. This EA is valid for two years and is not renewable. *Not available for all areas or to change grade band levels.
    - EA Option #5 - This is available to applicants hired by a school district as a Dual Language Immersion teacher who does not hold full licensure in this endorsement area. This EA is valid for one year and is renewable for up to three years.
    - COVID EA - This is for applicants unable to complete the requirements to meet initial licensure, renewal, or reinstatement requirements due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This EA must include a plan to meet missing requirements. This EA is valid for two years and is not renewable.
    - Professional, Industry, & Career Permit (PIC) - Last year, PTSB made significant changes to the PIC permit, which provides these educators with a route to acquire a standard license. Individuals who have held a PIC permit for at least ten (10) years and hold a bachelor's degree or higher may apply for a Standard Educator License with appropriate endorsements by verifying continuous teaching employment for ten (10) years or more for each field of occupational specialties. Individuals holding a PIC permit for less than ten (10) years that wish to apply for a Standard Educator License must take the following courses or their equivalent, at a minimum, from an accredited institution:
        - Foundations of development and learning.
        - Introduction to school law.
        - Introduction to special education.
        - Methods of instruction to include classroom management.
        - Introduction to Psychology.

- - - Developmental Psychology.
  - ○ EAs do NOT transfer to new districts - A reminder that an existing EA does not allow individuals to transfer their EA designation if a new district hires them. The educator must update their EA information, and the new district must sign off on the pending requirements. PTSB is in charge of licensure, not employment; therefore, not always aware when an educator secures employment in a new district.

  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.

Response:
The WDE will support LEAs in stabilizing the educator workforce in a variety of ways.
- Annual teacher shortage data will be shared with a year over year comparison allowing for the identification of trends related to specific teaching assignments.
- To support and stabilize the current educator workforce, the WDE will continue to offer high quality professional development opportunities. The following, while not an all-inclusive list, are indicative of the offerings made available to Wyoming educators:
  - ○ WAVES (Web-based Academic Vision & Excellence Symposium: targeted PD for educators providing IDEA special education and related services or those wanting to learn more.
  - ○ STAR (Summer Technical Assistance Retreat): Training and support for new and existing staff in LEAs centered on federal grant compliance, allowable uses of funds, planning and consultation, navigating the grants management system, and consolidated monitoring processes.
  - ○ Embracing Literacy: a PD opportunity dedicated to increasing educator's understanding of the science of reading and translating that knowledge into classroom practice.
  - ○ Developing Rewarding Integrated Vocational Experiences (DRIVE) Training: for paraprofessionals and job coaches who work with students in work-based learning.
  - ○ CTE including Tech Ed Tuesdays: focusing on recruiting, retaining and the unique characteristics of special populations; new CTE teacher orientation, Perkins Manager training.
  - ○ Native American Education Conference: 500-600 attendees annually receive training to learn about barriers facing American Indian children and how to remove or reduce those barriers so that tribal students succeed in school and in life. Programming includes understanding of tribal culture and history along with youth empowerment.
  - ○ Quality Matters: an ongoing PD opportunity for developing, teaching, and evaluating online and blended courses and content. All Wyoming educators are able to enroll in the online courses and training provided online by Quality

Matters and districts are also able to schedule workshops and training specifically for their staff.
  ○ eLearning Collaborative: a professional development opportunity for fourteen Wyoming ambassador teachers to help AIR identify challenges and develop training in supporting students at a distance and developing and improving online courses and content. The ambassadors will provide monthly training sessions on the topics and challenges identified for up to 500 other teachers in the state.
  ○ TeachUNITED Administrator Path: Based on feedback from administrators, training has been developed to help them in understanding how to best support their teachers who implement blended and online content and instruction. The administrator training was developed to mirror the topics in TeachUNITED training provided to teachers in the 2020-21 school year.
● The WDE also partners with state organizations to support educators and support personnel in additional ways:
  ○ Wyoming Custodians Annual Summer Conference.
  ○ Wyoming Pupil Transportation Annual Conference.
  ○ Wyoming Association of Career and Technical Education (WACTE).
  ○ Wyoming School Counselors Association (WySCA).
  ○ Wyoming Association of Special Education Administrators (WASEA).
● The WDE has identified the use of ESSER II SEA Reserve funds to support educators and students in the area of social emotional wellness and learning. Funds can be used for screening and evaluation tools, providing social-emotional support through counseling or mentorship, professional development, SEL curriculum or program development or purchase, or the temporary addition of necessary staff (counselors, school psychologists, para professionals to cover some tasks freeing time for certified staff to be engaged in their area of expertise).
● The WDE has provided information to LEAs on the allowable and appropriate uses of COVID relief funds. While data is not available on how these funds may have been used to avoid layoffs, many Wyoming districts were able to use these funds to cover costs associated with extended work hours and increased workforce for school food service providers, transportation workers, custodial staff, interventionist, school nurses, and teachers and administrators to accommodate the varied learning platforms, social distancing requirements, and to address students' learning needs.

     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).

Response:
● The WDE's Special Education Programs Division will be initiating a tuition reimbursement program for currently employed teachers in a Wyoming school district to obtain a master's degree in special education or an Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement. This program will be funded at $150,000.00 for the 2021-22 school year from the state set aside portion of the IDEA Part B 611 grant. The tuition reimbursement program is intended to be a 'grow your own' program for districts and the state to increase the number of teachers appropriately trained and certified to teach special

education. A shortage of special education teaching staff has been a historical issue in Wyoming and has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

- As noted earlier, ARP ESSER funds will be used to offer LEAs funding through a competitive grant, Addressing Gaps and Accelerated Learning. Districts may choose to use these funds in evidence-based interventions and programs to provide personnel in areas for which they are experiencing a shortage.

2. <u>Staffing to Support Student Needs</u>: 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).

Response:

- With the use of ESSER II SEA Reserve funds and ARP ESSER SEA Reserve funds, the WDE has supported funding a State School Nurse position to provide guidance and assistance to LEAs on policy and implementation of state and local health orders.
- The SAMHSA Project AWARE Grant has been implemented by WDE in order to promote the goal of a statewide system addressing school-aged mental health and substance abuse issues. There is a need for a reliable, standardized statewide system to coordinate and track progress, best practices, and share successes in addressing school-aged mental health issues to include staff professional development, training and family engagement. Currently, the WDE has partnered with three LEAs and three community Behavioral Health Partners (BHPs) with the goal of expanding the program statewide through the utilization of telehealth providers. After the five-year period of Project AWARE funding, we expect to have a strong and sustainable school-based behavioral health model for other districts to replicate throughout our state. APR ESSER SEA Reserve funding may be used to fund this model by making telehealth available to a greater number of districts and students.
- The WDE has identified the use of ESSER II SEA Reserve funds to support educators and students in the area of social emotional wellness and learning. Funds can be used for screening and evaluation tools, providing social-emotional support through counseling or mentorship, professional development, SEL curriculum or program development or purchase, or the temporary addition of necessary staff (counselors, school psychologists, para professionals to cover some tasks freeing time for certified staff to be engaged in their area of expertise).
- The WDE has identified the use of ARP ESSER SEA Reserve funds to support educators and students in a variety of content areas. Funds can be used for screening and evaluation tools, providing high-quality tutoring and interventions, professional development, specific curriculum or program purchase to replace less effective curricula, or the temporary addition of necessary staff (highly-qualified interventionist and tutors, counselors, school psychologists, and paraprofessionals to cover some tasks freeing time for certified staff to be engaged in their area of expertise).

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

   vi. Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).

Response:
The WDE currently collects many of the relevant data sets necessary for understanding the varied complexities of the education system in our state. We collect information on:
- Student learning.
- Use of exclusionary discipline.
- Access to and participation in advanced coursework.
- Access to high-quality educators.
- Access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists.
- Fiscal data to show per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels.

The WDE is making changes to current data collections for future reporting of necessary data elements such as mode of instruction at the student level, and school operating status. Additional adjustments will be implemented as required by USED for oversight and reporting of COVID relief funds.

The WDE recognizes the need for evaluating and supporting the capacity of SEA and LEA staff in accurately reporting and analyzing data. Ongoing efforts to improve include:

- Using ESSER administrative allowances, the WDE is hiring temporary staff to assist with the oversight and implementation of programs for the use of COVID relief funds. This will increase the WDE's capacity for SEA responsibilities as required by federal statute and provide increased support to LEAs.
- The use of ESSER II state reserve funds to contract services for a Wyoming Assessment Data Analyst (WADA) to analyze and interpret state assessment data for pre- and post-pandemic trends, make assessment data accessible to all Wyoming stakeholders, and through training opportunities support LEAs in the use of data interpretation to drive school improvement efforts.
- The use of ESSER II state reserve funds to contract for a district Professional Development Provider (PDP). The PDP will assist districts in using the analysis from the WADA in conjunction with local district assessment data (LEA generated formative and course summative assessment, screening data, Climate survey results, etc).
- The WDE's Finance Team provides twice yearly training to the LEAs business managers through WASBO (Wyoming Association of School Business Officers) where the training is focused on state and federal funding oversight.
- The WDE's Finance Team also hosts monthly SFDAC (School Finance and Data Advisory Committee) meetings where collaborative practices are reviewed and evaluated for possible improved accuracy and efficiency.
- The WDE's ESSA Grants Team, Special Education Program's Fiscal Manager, CTE and Nutrition Teams host semi-annual conferences and provide tailored TA opportunities throughout the year to all Wyoming districts in the appropriate uses, management, and monitoring of federal funds.
- LEAs receive individualized technical support directly tied to specific federal funding sources through the state's GMS where WDE program managers review and approve grant applications, expenditure plans, application amendments, reimbursement requests, and reporting requirements for compliance with governing federal statutes and regulations.

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.

Response:
The WDE has ongoing internal controls, risk assessment, fiscal monitoring, and a subrecipient monitoring process for oversight of all federal funds to ensure appropriate use and reduce potential waste, fraud, or abuse. The process begins with an LEA submission of an application in the state's GMS. The GMS tracks assurances, applications and revisions, budgeting, reimbursement requests, expenditure tracking, required indirect cost rates, required LEA documentation, and reporting requirements.

Applications are crafted to include all required assurances, award identification elements, and components associated with each specific federal grant. A qualified program manager, one familiar with the requirements of the funding source, reviews and approves each grant application. Applications not meeting the full requirements will be returned for revision prior to approval. A major component of the application and review process is the allocation of funds to specific allowable expenditures and activities detailed on the activities and budgeting sheets. Program managers review and approve ongoing requests for reimbursement throughout the life of the grant providing timely feedback and opportunity for correction.

Due to the high volume of COVID response funding made available to LEAs and the short window of opportunity for use, the WDE has implemented the following process for monitoring ESSER I, II, and ARP ESSER funds.

- Every quarter the ESSER LEA Grants Lead and Non-public School Lead will review expenditures and supporting documentation of expenditures (reports and/or receipts and purchase orders), and verify the following:
  - The expenditures are for appropriate purchases as allowed by the law.
  - The expenditures are for appropriate purchases as approved in grant applications.
  - All requirements relevant to each award are being implemented to include collection of specific data elements.
- If any information is out of compliance, the ESSER LEA Grants Lead will work with the LEA to execute steps to remedy the compliance issue (grant amendments, returning funds to the grant, other technical assistance and follow-up). The ESSER LEA Grants Lead also has the ability to seek further information if there is cause for concern based on the fiscal information reviewed.
- The WDE will monitor every Wyoming LEA through the quarterly Periodic Expenditure Reports, reviewing all expenditures to ensure allowability (per law and federal regulations), and to ensure connection to an approved, or amended and approved grant application.
- The WDE will utilize a risk assessment protocol that is designed to meet the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200 which considers the following risk factors for subrecipients:
  - The subrecipient's prior experience with other subawards.
  - The results of previous audits including whether or not the subrecipient receives a Single Audit in accordance with Subpart F - Audit Requirements, and the extent to which the same or similar subaward has been audited as a major program.
  - Whether the subrecipient has new personnel or new or substantially changed systems.
  - The extent and results of federal awarding agency monitoring (e.g., if the subrecipient also receives federal awards directly from a federal awarding agency).

If high risk subrecipients are identified, the WDE will consider additional training and technical assistance related to program requirements and may implement additional program audits, financial reviews, or other strategies designed to ensure compliance.

The WDE is beginning a bid proposal process to secure additional capacity for LEA training regarding ARP-ESSER implementation and reporting requirements for the COVID relief funds.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

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

Response:
Table 1 represents data accurate for the end of the 2020-21 school year.
Table 2 represents enrollment data from October 2020.

Table 1

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.

Add or change rows as needed

Number of schools	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only	347	320	0	27
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	347	320	0	27
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	347	339	0	8

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 2

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

Response:

October 2020 total enrollment, disaggregated by various student groups, has been provided in the table below. Historical enrollment by mode of instruction is not available at this time. The WDE will begin collecting student level mode of instruction for the 2021-22 school year and beyond. The first reporting period will be October of 2021 with additional data collected in March of 2022 and at the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Add or change rows as needed

Number of students	Total enrollment 91,938	Remote or online only	Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Full-time in-person instruction
Students from low-income families	30,995	#	#	#
White, not Hispanic	70,988	#	#	#
Black or African American, not Hispanic	865	#	#	#
Hispanic, of any race	13,143	#	#	#
Asian, not Hispanic	662	#	#	#
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	3,015	#	#	#
Native Hawaiian or		#	#	#

Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	147			
Two or more races, not Hispanic	3,118	#	#	#
Race/Ethnicity information not available	0	#	#	#
English learners	2,531	#	#	#
Children with disabilities	13,183	#	#	#
Students experiencing homelessness	853	#	#	#
Children and youth in foster care	626	#	#	#
Migratory students	104	#	#	#

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:
  o 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
  o 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

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Educations 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.