

### Arkansas ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for Arkansas: \$1,254,119,960

ARP ESSER funding released to Arkansas on March 24, 2021: \$835,485,222

ARP ESSER funding released to Arkansas on July 7, 2021: \$418,634,738

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 486,305

#### **Top Priorities within Arkansas's plan:**

- Addressing student mental and emotional health
- Addressing the loss of instructional time due to the COVID-19 pandemic

#### **Highlights of Arkansas' Plan:**

- **Returning to In Person Learning in 2021:** Arkansas returned to in-person instruction in August of 2020. For the 2021-2022 school year, 262 local educational agencies (LEAs) will offer a full-time on-site option for students. .
- **Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** The state was able to successfully reopen all schools to in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year by working with the Arkansas Department of Health to establish and implement statewide guidance. Each LEA was required to create its own Ready for Learning plan that focused on the safe return to in-person instruction by outlining the LEA's health and safety protocols and flexible options for student learning.
- **Supporting Students Most Impacted by the Pandemic:** Over the course of the pandemic, DESE has and will continue to identify and engage students, particularly those who have been disengaged in academic instruction, including by partnering with Engage Arkansas to identify students most at risk of failure or dropout. The DESE is also providing each LEA with access to a Smart Data dashboard, which will assist LEAs in identifying individual students who are in need of intervention.
- **Addressing the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time:** Using American Rescue Plan funds, DESE created the Arkansas Tutoring Corps, which includes recruitment, preparation, and support for candidates to become qualified tutors to provide instruction or intervention to meet the academic needs of at-risk learners or students most impacted by lost instructional time. A system will connect prepared candidates with organizations seeking support students' academic needs. The Arkansas Tutoring Corps project will enhance learning experiences of students due to loss of instructional time and address gaps in foundational skills in mathematics and literacy.
- **Investing in Summer Learning and Expanded Afterschool Programs:** DESE will partner with Arkansas State University to support its Arkansas out-of-school network using ARP ESSER funds. This network will work to approve programs/activities that can include academic programs, specialty programs, social-emotional support programs, future-ready work opportunities, and multi-purpose programs that provide an array of activities this summer and afterschool. Additionally, the DESE partnered with Arkansas PBS at the end of the 2019-2020 school year and into summer of 2020 to provide grade band content developed by previous

Arkansas Teachers of the Year paired with learning guides, and quality programming. This partnership will continue into summer 2021 and is slated to provide educational programs for elementary aged students to help with lost instructional time. These programs include content standards in addition to social, emotional, and mental health material. Arkansas PBS will provide data regarding number of viewers and number of downloads of instructional materials for evaluation of the program.

- **Supporting Students' and Educators Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs:** DESE is developing supports using ARP ESSER funds for school counselors and district teams on navigating grief and loss. DESE has hosted webinars with school counselors on grief basics and bi-monthly/ quarterly meetings for school counselors will be to address topics of concerns. DESE will follow up with live in-person sessions for schools to support the development of their own crisis intervention plan. Finally, AWARE also developed podcasts related to face masks, responding to grief, and supporting virtual students in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The SEA will continue to encourage LEAs to utilize COVID funds or find other ways to support students with appropriate wraparound services.

**When Arkansas's LEA Use of Funds Plans will be due:** August