ALABAMA

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

U.S. Department of Education

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Grantee and Contact Information

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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) **Eric G. MacKey, Ed.D.**	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative Eric G. MacKey	Date: June 25, 2021

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A. Describing the State's Current Status and Needs

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

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

   Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day is not only the Alabama State Department of Education's motto, but a guiding philosophy about the work that we undertake on behalf of the 740,000 children who enter our public schools every day. Our guiding philosophy is that every child should be afforded every chance to succeed in school and become a productive citizen after high school. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges to the department and the state in carrying out this goal. However, the SEA worked collaboratively with other governmental agencies, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and the community-at-large to set priorities, implement strategies, and align resources to focus on the top priority of maintaining safety for all students and continuing educational services.

   In response to the pandemic, there are strategies/practices that have proven successful in supporting students throughout the state, particularly those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are just a few of the strategies/practices:

   - Alabama's Roadmap to Reopening Schools

     This guidance document assisted LEAs with developing their plan for reopening schools safely, and included the following sections:
     - Governance
     - Community Spread and School Operating Status
     - Wellness
     - Return to Campus – Wellness & Operations & Facilities
     - Roadmap Resources
     - Alabama Teaching and Learning Framework
     - Health Services
     - Child Nutrition

   - LEA re-opening plans- LEAs submitted a comprehensive plan that addressed their response to the pandemic to include continuing teaching and learning and mitigating the impact of the pandemic. The SEA used

a rubric to review each LEA plan, posted the completed plans on the SEA website, and required quarterly updates from LEAs regarding mode(s) of learning based on the pandemic's impact, risk factors, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) guidance.

- Food distribution- In an attempt to ensure all students, particularly students most severely impacted by the pandemic received meals, the SEA and LEAs ensured they were provided meals via school buses and at specified pickup locations throughout the communities.

- Virtual Teaching Platform- COVID-19 Relief Funds were targeted to address needed supports for LEAs to continue serving students by providing a virtual teaching platform and identification of critical teaching standards.

- SEA Support- The SEA team worked collaboratively to support LEAs through the process of continuing educational support to students during the public health order and COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 Relief Funds were targeted to address needed supports for LEAs to continue serving students by providing a virtual teaching platform and identification of critical teaching standards. The Governor's GEER allocation allowed LEAs to use funds for Wi-Fi for school buses, bridging learning gaps, and before and after school tutoring. This allowed students to continue their learning, although school buildings were closed due to the pandemic. LEAs were supported in developing a plan for reopening schools. The SEA established Office Hours, serving as work sessions, to provide specific targeted support for LEAs. The SEA also developed and shared Roadmap to Recovery Resources with LEAs.

- The SEA will encourage LEAs to submit lessons learned and best practices to the *Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse* on webinars conducted with Alabama schools and post the link on the SEA's website.

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

   Based on information collected over the past year, the most recent survey of school and community needs, discussions with stakeholders, and all data currently available to the SEA, the following priorities have been identified as an overall focus for the state:

   - **Accelerating Learning:** When comparing student progress to that of academic progress in a typical school year, preliminary data indicate that

more students are not making adequate progress. Sample formative data indicate an overall study decline in student achievement data in the areas of reading and mathematics for school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Although a decline in reading and math scores are evident, the decrease in achievement scores is greater in reading than in math. To this end, it important for the state to focus on the mastery of both critical grade level math and reading standards but with a high emphasis placed on early literacy. Particular concern is around students in grades K-3 due to the disruption in learning and its impact on student retention due to not passing the upcoming 2022 3rd grade literacy assessment. Further identification of trends in the data will be analyzed once 2020-21 data results become available.

- **Increase Learning Opportunities:** In an effort to support and accelerate all students impacted by the pandemic, LEAs will be encouraged to identify students who have been disengaged (those who have missed the most instruction and/or who did not participate in remote instruction), missing (students who have not returned to class or engaged in remote instructional opportunities since March 2020), and retained students and provide them multiple opportunities to increase instructional time.
- **Mental Health and Social Emotional Needs:** To date, data from the CDC indicates the number of deaths in Alabama from COVID-19 is 11,220 which equates to 230 deaths per 100,000 people. This is the 8th highest death per capita in the nation. This data suggest that students and educators in Alabama are more likely to have experienced the loss of a loved one from COVID-19. In addition, the CDC data indicate the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for students age 10-24 is suicide. In Alabama, the third leading cause of death for students ages 15-24 is suicide. The stress of the pandemic has only exacerbated existing concerns for students and educators in Alabama. To support improved mental health and social emotional needs, the SEA will further prioritize comprehensive wraparound services within a Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) system.

3. Identifying Needs of Underserved Students: Describe your State's 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:
   i. Students from low-income families,
   ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),
   iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),
   iv. English learners,

v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")),
vi. Students experiencing homelessness,
vii. Children and youth in foster care,
viii. Migratory students, and
ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).

To the extent possible, this description should include data on indicators such as estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time,[1] chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

Based on information collected over the past year, the most recent survey of school and community needs, discussions with stakeholders, and all data currently available to the SEA, the primary priorities of accelerating learning, increasing learning opportunities, and mental health support (see question 2) affect all of Alabama student groups, even though the pandemic may have had a disproportionate effect on some of Alabama's most vulnerable populations, the issues identified in question 2 may apply with differing intensity for groups of students.

Alabama's largest most persistent achievement gaps prior to the pandemic were for students with disabilities, black students, and students who are English learners. At this time, more up-to-date estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time on each group of students are not possible due to a recent change in state assessments (first administration of the assessment was given spring of 2021) and the waiver approved by the USDOE to forgo spring 2020 testing. The SEA will interpret and analyze the spring assessment data when it becomes available and target resources and efforts to students that need the most assistance. There is formative data that LEAs administered and is available to the LEA but not at the state level. As part of the ESSER II and the LEA ARP ESSER plan development process, a needs assessment is required. LEAs are asked to include subpopulation data to identify student needs.

As a resource to support LEAs as they determine needs, the SEA developed a *Road to Recovery Resource Guide* that encompasses strategies for assessing learning loss, evaluating high-quality instructional material, unfinished learning supports and design strategies for subpopulations.

[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.

The SEA is committed to increasing academic outcomes and removing the non-academic barriers to learning for all students in Alabama. Academic and accountability data are available at the subgroup level. Reports can be generated by the state, district, or schools, however the information currently in the Report Card system is not updated information due to the receipt of waivers for testing last spring. LEAs and schools administer a variety of formative assessments and screeners to provide real-time information to address the academic needs of all students. Improvement plans are developed and processed in an electronic platform to create plans designed to identify and close gaps. Student health and perception surveys will be used to provide districts with a way to identify non-academic barriers to learning.

It is a concern of the state that for the student groups listed above existing gaps in both reading and math will become larger. This is due to mitigating factors negatively impacting attendance and loss of instructional time due to the impact of COVID. In addition to increased academic outcomes, the SEA has focused on increasing opportunities for all but particularly for the most vulnerable subgroups by expanding CTE programs, dual enrollment, gifted, AP, IB, health and physical education, STEM, computer science industry credentials/certified programs, expanding Wi-Fi access and infrastructure, expansion of early post-secondary expansion programs, expanding Science of Reading training for educators, and transition services across state.

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

   The SEA will analyze the most recent academic data from state standardized assessments against previous year's results to diagnose the areas of need for academic achievement and academic growth, as well as progress in English language acquisition of our English Learners (EL) population. The SEA currently can display up to four (4) years of comparative data through the Alabama Education Report Card. The SEA also has, for LEA use, secure data portals that contain both raw assessment and accountability data for previous years. These portals offer the option of on-demand filtering or the ability to export for further analysis within the local LEA environment.

   The academic data used will include the following: K-8 Literacy and Math Assessments, ACT w/Writing, WorkKeys, College & Career Readiness Indicators, CTE course progression data, and failure rates. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, the SEA will begin collecting Alabama Comprehensive

Assessment Program (ACAP) and Pre- and post- assessment data for summer learning programs.

Non-academic data will include attendance, graduation rate, participation rate, student discipline, student surveys, and referrals for health and counseling services. These data points will be used to identify the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic in need of mental health support. In an effort to provide support to staff concerning mental health needs of students, the legislature recently passed a law requiring annual mental health training for employees of each public K-12 school. The training will assist school personnel in supporting students with social, emotional, and mental needs.

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.
        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
        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.

    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.

    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.

The SEA currently collects mode of instruction data for each LEA. The State is currently working to revise its collection process by collecting student-level instructional mode data to generate subpopulation data. Current instructional mode data may be found on the state website at the Instructional Delivery Mode link. The subpopulation data for mode of instruction will be available this fall. The generated reports will be updated on a regular basis and made available on the SEAs public website.

LEAs collect enrollment and attendance data for all students through the Student Information System (SIS) daily. This collection of data is available to the SEA nightly through an upload from the SIS to the SEA's servers. This process will continue, however the planned enhancement to the system will afford the SEA the capacity to collect enrollment and attendance data by subpopulation for each instructional mode offered and generate reports that can help support the goals of access and equity especially for student subgroups.

Because the state of emergency and Governor's Health Order both expired in May, along with the decreasing coronavirus numbers and availability of vaccines, the expectation is for summer learning programs and the 2021-22 school year to be 100% in person for all schools in the state of Alabama.

B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

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

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

    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;

    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

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

Beginning Spring 2021, all LEAs in the state offered in-person instruction. The expectation is that 100% of schools will return to in-person learning in the fall of 2021. The SEA is supporting LEAs in their development of *Return to In-Person Instruction Plans* through technical assistance, webinars, Office Hours, and work sessions. LEAs are also provided a plethora of resources to support their plan including the Roadmap to Recovery Resources . These resources were made available to LEAs at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the SEA provided and will continue to provide support to LEAs through resources to address prevention and mitigation strategies recommended by the CDC for reopening and operating of school facilities. This information is provided quarterly, or as CDC guidelines are revised.

The SEA superintendent will continue *Midweek Matters* newsletter as a method to communicate up-to-date guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and CDC, for the safe reopening and operating of school facilities. To ensure schools are able to safely remain open, the ADPH and the SEA have partnered to provide updated COVID-19 case information for each county and school district in the state, through the use of the Alabama K-12 COVID-19 Dashboard. With real time data, school and health officials are able to react and respond to situations quickly in an effort to decrease the likelihood of an outbreak. In addition, the ADPH has continued to support the department and LEAs by producing a Back to School Toolkit that is updated as new information is obtained. In an effort to mitigate the spread of coronavirus in school facilities and on buses, the SEA delivered facemasks, hand sanitizer, and gloves to LEAs. In addition, a portion of GEER funds were reserved for equipping buses with WI-FI so that communities across the state will continue to have access to the internet.

The ADPH and the SEA's health staff have partnered to provide trainings to the appropriate LEA staff on facts about COVID-19, mitigation strategies, facts about vaccinations, and safety protocols. In addition, partnerships with the LEAs and county health department officials have coordinated efforts to provide screenings and vaccinations to eligible community members. The SEA used the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to fund salary or wages for healthcare professionals or aides to provide COVID-19 response and mitigation services at the schools.

The SEA has been collecting data, on a quarterly basis, on the Mode of Instruction (in-person, hybrid, or remote) offered by every district. The data are published on the department's website and is regularly updated. New methods for collecting mode of instruction data at the student-level will be implemented

beginning this fall.

2. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans: Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/ (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on the LEA's website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:
    i. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;
    ii. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;
    iii. How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),[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.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEA's superintendent assembled a Superintendent's Extending Access to Learning (SEAL) Taskforce comprised of educators and other state partners from across the state to assist LEAs with operations, both functionally and instructionally. Sub-committees were developed to include a reopening committee. The group developed the Roadmap to Reopening Schools Resource Guide to assist districts with reopening schools and providing continuity of serves.

[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.

Prior to ARP ESSER, LEAs completed and submitted reopening plans to the SEA. Reopening plans are publicly available on the SEA's website (District Reopening Plans). In addition, LEAs are required to modify the previously submitted plan to address the recommended mitigation strategies, as outlined in the assurances in the ARP ESSER plan. LEAs are also required to publicly post plans on their district's website. This will allow the SEA quick access to monitor and ensure the plans have the requirement elements and are updated as required.

In the plan, LEAs must describe how they will ensure continuity of services addressing the student's academic, social, and emotional needs. The SEA created a rubric to ensure all areas are addressed. LEAs must assess students to determine existing gaps and have a plan to address the needs of the students. The SEA required that LEAs certify assurances that included reviewing their plan every 6 months and engaging public input. The SEA will review LEA plans periodically to ensure they are revised every 6 months, with public input, for the duration of the grant period. LEAs must address each of the elements of the CDC guidelines, and the extent to which they are implemented in its *Return to In-Person Instruction Plan*.

The SEA will monitor plans as part of desk audits and the compliance monitoring process. In addition, LEAs will submit a 6-month implementation check-up form to the department on implementation status. ARP ESSER funding will be used to secure additional support needed to monitor ARP ESSER activities and impact data.

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

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

1. SEA Consultation: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
    i. students;
    ii. families;
    iii. Tribes (if applicable);
    iv. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
    v. school and district administrators (including special education administrators);
    vi. superintendents;
    vii. charter school leaders (if applicable);

viii. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and

ix. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

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

The SEA engaged in the public distribution of a survey to students, educators, parents, community members, and the general public at large, including advocacy groups representing vulnerable populations. The survey was sent to stakeholder groups through email and was available on social media platforms. Over 2,700 responses were submitted.

A questionnaire was conducted with the following stakeholders regarding topics aligned to Alabama's ARP ESSER state plan (e.g., the current and promising practices, highest priorities, state needs and teacher shortages, extent of support needed for various areas): students; families; tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); school and district administrators (including special education administrators); superintendents; charter school leaders; teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, their unions; 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, other underserved students; and members of the general public.

After gathering initial data from stakeholders, virtual opportunities were held to further engage participants in the development of the plan. In developing the state plan, the SEA reviewed survey responses, stakeholder questionnaires, and stakeholder responses and wrote the plan to incorporate the supports and priorities indicated by respondents to best address the needs identified. A draft was created and posted to the SEA's website and a virtual meeting held for questions and public comment. After receiving comments, the plan was finalized.

2. Coordinating Funds: Describe to what extent the SEA has and will coordinate Federal COVID-19 pandemic funding and other Federal funding. This description must include:

   i. How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups

(including students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);

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)	**SEA Uses:** Grants to LEAs -Virtual Instructional Platform -Electronic Textbooks Enhancement of the SEA Data Reporting system **LEA Uses:** -Sanitation Supplies -PPE -Salaries/benefits for staff -Technology -Professional Development -Mental Health Services -Summer Learning & Enrichment programs -After School programs	**Total award amount:** $183,135,558 **Awarded to LEAs:** $175,021,322 **Reserved by SEA:** $8,114,236
GEER I (CARES Act)	**LEA Uses:** Grants to LEAs -Equip school buses with Wi-Fi -Bridge learning and achievement gaps of students -Before and after school tutoring -Family engagement resources	**Total award amount:** $48,851,495 **Awarded to LEAs:** $48,581,495
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	**SEA Uses:** Grants to LEAs -Summer Reading Camps for Grades K-3 -Professional Development for Language Arts and Math Course of Study	**Total award amount:** $899,464,932 **Awarded to LEAs:** $809,518,439 **Reserved by SEA:** $89,946,493

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
	-reading and math formative assessments in grades 4-8 **LEA Uses:** -Instructional Materials -Professional Development -Assessments -Remediation & Enrichment Programs -Family Support Resources -Salary/benefits for staff -Facility Improvements & Repairs	
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	Kindergarten readiness assessments, screeners, and kits for reading	$5,363,270

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.

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]

[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.

The SEA has been intentional from the initial release of funding to ensure strategies were meeting immediate and evolving needs identified in the field and leveraging the state's capacity to support LEAs. Stakeholder engagement sessions emphasized what was already identified in Alabama's strategic plan, *Alabama Achieves,* which was completed March of 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the plan, five strategic priorities were identified- Academic Growth and Achievement, College, Career, and Workforce Ready, Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, Highly Effective Educators, Customer-Friendly Services. Given *Alabama Achieves* was developed through a similarly robust engagement strategy, the identified needs in the strategic plan, the survey, and district feedback were all aligned, often highlighting more severe needs on the same subjects as the pandemic exacerbated needs for additional academic supports, especially in early grades, the educator supports and preparedness, and student readiness and supports. Based on these results, the state prioritized initial funding supports from the CARES Act, including leveraging the CRF to immediate widespread issues of technology device and connectivity access. With the release of the CRRSA funds with an emphasis on learning loss and school facilities, the SEA encouraged districts to continue to build out their funding plans strategically to meet both immediate and long-term needs. The SEA complemented these strategies by developing plans for summer and tutoring programming. With the release of ARP ESSER funding, the SEA supported alignment to existing strategies with an emphasis on deepening their scope and reach. As a result, the state's intent with the latest round of funding is to further support strategies previously identified, allowing for more strategic use of funds across sources and across rounds.

The SEA has awarded all LEAs the available funds for the CARES Act, CRSSA, and ARP. There have been multiple grants provided that supported LEA and state activities through the CARES Act. The breakdown below provides a brief narrative regarding the intent of each grant allocated from the CARES Act. Each grant had an explicit purpose to support LEAs with the impact of COVID-19.

The SEA has supported LEAs to offset expenditures related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support with maintaining safety procedures for students who selected options to participate in full-time instruction. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEA used ESSER I funds to provide a virtual platform for schools to carryout virtual instruction and to provide access to digital textbooks. Formula grants were provided to LEAs to use for COVID-19 impact activities. The funds were used to safely return to in-person instruction, maximize in-person instruction, sustain operations, and to address disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on individual student groups including responding to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

GEER I Funds
GEER I funds were provided as grants to LEAs to equip buses with Wi-Fi to students access to virtual learning, bridge learning and achievement gaps of students, and provide before and after school tutoring.

ESSER II Funds
ESSER II funds were provided as grants to LEAs for the following:

- Course of Study ELA PD: This allocation was granted to each LEA to be used for course of study PD directly aligned to 2021 Course of Study: English Language Arts. To be considered high quality, the PD must include training on the specific-grade and course-level standards, as well as provide pedagogical connections for instruction. Base allocations were provided for:
    - A) Elementary Teachers (K-5) - $400 for registration, materials, substitutes for follow-up trainings or PLCs.
    - B) Secondary Teachers (6-12) - $1,050 for registration, materials, substitutes for follow-up trainings or PLCs.
- Course of Study Math PD: This allocation was granted to each LEA to be used for course of study PD directly aligned to 2019 Course of Study: Mathematics. To be considered high-quality, the PD must include training on the specific-grade and-course level standards, learning progressions, as well as provide pedagogical connections for instruction.
    - A) Elementary Teachers (K-5) - $400 for registration, materials, substitutes for follow-up trainings or Professional Learning Committees (PLCs).
    - B) Secondary Teachers (6-12) - $1,050 for registration, materials, substitutes for follow-up trainings or PLCs
- **Assessment Award for Grades 4-8:** This allocation was granted to extend each school's early reading and math assessment system through Grade 8. The allocation will be $12 per student based on each school's 2020-2021 ADM.

Upon receiving funds, LEAs were required to conduct a needs assessment and prioritize the needs of the LEA in efforts to return to in-person instruction, to maximize instructional time, and have the necessary supports in place to sustain safe operations. Additionally, LEAs used ESSER II funds for resources and instructional supports. The funds were used for instructional materials, professional development, assessments, accelerating learning, enrichment programs, salaries and benefits for staff, family supports for instruction, and facilities and improvements for students and staff in efforts to address CDC recommendations.

GEER II Funds
GEER II funds were used to provide LEAs with kindergarten readiness, screeners, assessments, and aligned reading kits.

Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)
The SEA used CRF to fund salary or wages for healthcare professionals or aides to provide COVID-19 response and mitigation services at the schools.

ARP ESSER Funds
Funds from ARP ESSER will be used to continue efforts in funding activities for safely returning to in-person instruction, maximizing in-person instruction, sustaining operations, and to address disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on individual student groups including responding to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. As requested by stakeholders, the majority of the 10% SEA state reserve will be granted to LEAs to support these efforts. The SEA state reserve specifically identified for instructional loss, summer enrichment, and afterschool programs will be granted to the LEAs through formula grants. The remaining ARP ESSER Funds will be coordinated with other federal funds to address the identified priorities. To date, the following activities/programs will be targeted: SRCs for the upcoming three summers for grades K-3, professional development in the areas of reading and math, increase English Learner supports across the state, provide math support across the state with Teachers in Residence, provide state-wide training and supports on implementing extended services to ensure equitable access to integrated learning loss programs by providing necessary supports and accommodations for all students, and extend the current ACCESS distance learning program to grades 6-8.

The SEA will keep track of ESSER ARP LEA allocations through the Electronic Grant Application Program (eGAP) and the state's financial management system.

The SEA will continue to provide guidance on how federal funds, including funds under ESEA, IDEA, McKinney-Vento, and Perkins, can be used during the COVID-19 pandemic on specific student and educator needs related to reopening schools and sustaining safe operations. One example of how these funds are coordinated at the state level is by purchasing a online training module with McKinney-Vento funds to assist LEAs in identifying and assisting homeless students. In addition, through a collaboration with 2-1-1 Connect Alabama, a phone service will be provided to LEAs to get help for homeless students and support for families (clothes, housing, etc.) by connecting families with homeless liaisons within the community.

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.

The SEA will use its 5% set aside under section 2001(f)(1) to provide opportunities for students to accelerate learning by supporting LEAs to address the needs of students most impacted by COVID-19 by awarding the entire state reserve amount through grants to LEAs using a weighted formula to address the most vulnerable student groups. Weighting included factors such as special education, poverty, EL, and student proficiency results. All LEAs will receive state reservation funds through an application process.LEAs will use funds to focus on those 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 students retained in the area of reading. In their application, LEAs must describe how they will identify and serve students who missed the most in person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020- 2021 school years and students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures and how they will be served in the program(s).

LEAs at a minimum must describe the following in their application:

- 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 LEA has selected, and the extent to which the LEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

- How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the vulnerable student populations; indicating the data sources;

- The extent to which the LEA will use funds to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures and 3) retained students.

The SEA will provide supports, resources, and training to LEAs on effective summer enrichment program implementation including evidence-based practices and assessments, materials, program timeframe, hours, and student-teacher ratio requirements. In addition, LEAs will be provided the *Road to Recovery Resource Guide* to assist with unfinished learning supports design strategies that include strategies for student subpopulations. LEAs must align designed programs with those that are evidence-based. The LEA will use the criteria outlined in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) for evidence-based interventions listed below:

- Has research from studies using a well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design (meets Tier 1 or 2 evidence)
- Has research showing promising evidence from a well-implemented, correlations study that statistically controls for selection bias (meets ESSA Tier 3 evidence)
- Has rationale demonstrating the intervention is likely to improve student outcomes, and an effort to study the effects of the intervention is underway (meets ESSA Tier 4 evidence).

The academic impact for lost instructional time allocation will be used to address the early literacy priority in the state. The funds will be used to support the Summer Reading Camps (SRCs) for grades K-3. SRC programs are designed to

provide students with additional opportunities for learning and growing during the summer months. LEAs should strive to create opportunities for all students to have access to the camp, however, according to the Alabama Literacy Act, "*Each local education agency shall provide summer reading camps to all K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency...The Alabama Summer Achievement Program is established and shall be available to all K—3 students in public elementary schools that are among the lowest performing five percent of elementary schools (full support schools)." (Alabama Literacy Act pages 16-17)* LEAs are not limited to this number of students and can always exceed the minimum expectation outlined in the Alabama Literacy Act.

The SRCs will be staffed by highly effective teachers of reading. The program shall provide direct, explicit, and systematic reading intervention services and supports to improve any identified area of reading deficiency including-phonological awareness, The Alphabetic Principle: decoding & accuracy, encoding & accuracy, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and oral language. At a minimum, 70 hours of scientifically based reading instruction and intervention must take place. LEAs are to adhere to research suggested effective teacher-student ratio sizes for providing instruction. The LEAs are required to report pre-and post-reading assessment data. Assessments used must come from the approved list of reading assessments that was reviewed by the Alabama Literacy Act Taskforce. Reading camp data including participation and assessment data will be submitted in the reading portal and used to measure program impact.

The SEA will support the LEAs with the SRCs by providing Early Literacy of Science in Reading training throughout the state. The SEA will provide supports, resources, embedded coaching, and training to LEAs on effective summer program implementation and practices.

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.

The SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act (1%) to focus on providing intensive support through summer learning and enrichment programs by supporting LEAs and awarding grants from the state set-aside funds to address the needs of students most impacted by COVID-19, particularly those 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 retained students. The SEA will allocate the entire state reserve amount to LEAs using a weighted formula to address the most vulnerable student groups. Weighting included factors such as special education, poverty, EL, and student proficiency results. All LEAs will receive state reserve funds through an application process.

In their application, LEAs must describe how they will identify and serve students who missed the most in person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020- 2021 school years and students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures and how they will be served in the program(s).

LEAs at a minimum must describe the following in their application:

- 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 LEA has selected, and the extent to which the LEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

- How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the vulnerable student populations; indicating the data sources;

- The extent to which the LEA will use funds to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the

2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures and 3) retained students.

The SEA will provide supports, resources, and training to LEAs on effective summer enrichment program implementation including evidence-based practices and assessments, materials, program timeframe, hours, and student-teacher ratio requirements. In addition, LEAs will be provided the *Road to Recovery Resource Guide* to assist with unfinished learning supports design strategies that include strategies for student subpopulations. LEAs must align designed programs with those that are evidence-based. The LEA will use the criteria outlined in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) for evidence-based interventions listed below:

- Has research from studies using a well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design (meets Tier 1 or 2 evidence)
- Has research showing promising evidence from a well-implemented, correlations study that statistically controls for selection bias (meets ESSA Tier 3 evidence)
- Has rationale demonstrating the intervention is likely to improve student outcomes, and an effort to study the effects of the intervention is underway (meets ESSA Tier 4 evidence).

3. Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs (including, for example, before-school programming), and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

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

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

   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.

The SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (1%) by providing evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs (including, for example, before-school programming and out-of-school-time programs) to LEAs through the awarding of grants from the state set-aside funds to address the needs of students most impacted by COVID-19, particularly those 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 retained students. The SEA will allocate the entire state reserve amount to LEAs using a weighted formula to address the most vulnerable student groups. Weighting included factors such as special education, poverty, EL, and student proficiency results. All LEAs will receive state reserve funds through an application process.

LEAs at a minimum must describe the following in their application:

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

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

- The extent to which the LEA will use funds to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures and 3) retained students.

The SEA will provide supports, resources, and training to LEAs on effective afterschool/out-of-school program implementation including evidence-based practices and assessments, materials, program timeframe, hours, and student-teacher ratio requirements. In addition, LEAs will be provided the *Road to Recovery Resource Guide* to assist with unfinished learning supports design strategies that include strategies for student subpopulations. LEAs must align designed programs with those that are evidence-based. The LEA will use the criteria outlined in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) for evidence-based interventions listed below:

- Has research from studies using a well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design (meets Tier 1 or 2 evidence)
- Has research showing promising evidence from a well-implemented, correlations study that statistically controls for selection bias (meets ESSA

Tier 3 evidence)

- Has rationale demonstrating the intervention is likely to improve student outcomes, and an effort to study the effects of the intervention is underway (meets ESSA Tier 4 evidence).

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.

   At this time, the SEA has not identified other needs, not previously addressed by other funding categories.

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.

The SEA will ensure all necessary components of the ARP ESSER requirements are part of the LEA ARP ESSER Plan. The LEA will be required to submit its plan for the use of the ARP ESSER Funds via eGAP no later than August 23, 2021. To ensure that each plan meets the minimum requirements, a guidance document will be provided.

The SEA will require districts to submit a two-part LEA plan. Part I of the plan required the ARP ESSER assurances to be signed verifying receipt of LEA allocations, adherence to federal guidelines and regulations, and acknowledgement of Part II requirements. Part II of the plan (due August 23, 2021) will require LEAs to describe at a minimum:

- 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;
- 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;
- How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and
- 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.
- How the LEA will measure impact of ARP ESSER funded activities.

In the eGAP system, LEAs will be required to respond to the following: *How the*

LEA will ensure that the ARP ESSER funded interventions, including but not limited to the 20% set-aside, 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.

Each LEA application will undergo a multi-level state review to ensure the program requirements are met and appropriately documented. In the ARP ESSER application, LEAs will be required to provide additional insight into how the remaining 80% of ESSER funds will be spent. In the ARP ESSER application, LEAs are required to complete the applicable focus areas, verify the amount, and explain how each focus area addresses the prioritized needs. The amount will auto-populate based on the input from the LEA's proposed budget. In the e-GAP system, LEAs are required to respond to the following: *How will the LEA use the remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with statutory requirements?* Each LEA application will undergo a multi-level state review to ensure the program requirements are met and appropriately documented.

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

   The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:
   i. Tribes;
   ii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
   iii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

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

   As part of its LEA ARP ESSER application, the SEA will require meaningful consultation with the listed stakeholders. The LEA application for ARP ESSER specifically addresses stakeholder consultation and engagement. Further, LEAs

will be asked to provide specific information on this consultation, as well as the URL where the LEA plan will be posted and made available to the public. The stakeholder consultation and engagement and supporting documentation will be integrated into the SEA's compliance monitoring process. All LEAs will be monitored annually in one of the three tiers (self, desktop, onsite) based on the department's risk assessment. Stakeholder consultation and engagement is an indicator in the instrument across all tiers of monitoring. This component will also be made part of compliance monitoring.

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, reengage, 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.

The SEA's multi-tiered monitoring framework includes three distinct levels: on-site, desktop, and self-monitoring. A risk analysis comprised of multiple indicators identifies the level of potential risk. Results from the analysis designate each LEA's risk level. Each LEA in the state must participate in one level of monitoring annually; however, SEA has also developed business rules to this process to ensure that all LEAs are monitored (desktop or on-site) at least once every five years.

The SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using funds to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time. The SEA will develop a checklist to assist LEAs with self-monitoring of federal relief funds to ensure compliance with regulations. The process will include data collection and monitoring for implementation as well

as impact.

The programmatic and financial aspects of monitoring will reside in eGAP. Specific regulations will be observed during regularly scheduled desk audits and compliance monitoring visits. In an effort to build capacity with the LEAs, temporary part-time personnel will work in collaboration with the LEAs on pre-monitoring activities. The eGAP platform will be used to approve the use of federal funds and ensure compliance with federal regulations. In efforts to build capacity and safeguard funds for their intended purposes, there is a 3-step approval process at the LEA level, and a 3-step approval process at the SEA level.

The SEA will issue guidance for evidence-based strategies that includes a list of SEA-reviewed resources for evidence-based interventions and strategies that respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Lists will include summer learning, extended day or year programs, and additional strategies that provide effect sizes necessary to result in improvement. The SEA will collect information on the effectiveness of interventions.

The SEA's guidance for evidence-based strategies will include strategies that are specifically meant to respond to the needs of students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including each of the student groups listed in Question A.3.i.-viii. The SEA and LEAs will monitor district implementation of evidence-based strategies used to address the needs of student groups disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in the same manner other supports and implementation will be delivered and monitored. Data obtained to measure implementation and progress will be disaggregated by subpopulations.

The SEA will assist districts in determining activities to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time by incorporating these activities into technical assistance resources provided to all districts for the 2021-22 school year.

The SEA will monitor district implementation of strategies for reengagement and support by periodically reviewing available data regarding student progress or requesting data when not available. The SEA will also require districts to report on implementation of evidence-based strategies to enable the evaluation of effectiveness of such strategies. As additional information regarding federal monitoring requirements becomes available, the SEA will review its current monitoring protocols and make revisions as necessary to align with the federal requirements.

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.

The SEA will provide guidance and technical assistance on the use of ESSER funds that highlights how allowable activities may be used to advance educational equity. As part of their application, LEAs will be required to provide information on their plans to use ARP ESSER funds to implement an equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction.

In addition, as part of the school improvement process, the LEA/schools administer teacher, student, and community climate surveys, with the mission to create and sustain safe and supportive learning environments, thereby, increasing academic success for all students. These resources are intended to provide LEAs with data to inform decisions on school culture, including discipline, student perception, and teacher working conditions.

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.

   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.

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).

Alabama has experienced teacher shortages in the subject areas of mathematics, science, special education, and English over the last several years. Procedures have been implemented to address teacher shortage concerns. Some local districts offer signing bonuses; other school districts rely on state incentives to fill shortage areas. Provisional and emergency certification routes are utilized by some local school systems to fill vacancies.

Interest in the teaching profession nationally has decreased, because the teaching profession has become less attractive to young professionals. It is the goal of the SEA to ensure students are being taught by educators with proper credentials. Each academic year teacher shortage data are collected and reported to the United States Department of Education, and Alabama data are listed in the national Teacher Shortage Areas (TSA) database. This system is designed to collect data from states and jurisdictions and generate Teacher Shortage Areas Reports intended to be a reference document that shows where state and schools are looking to potentially hire properly credentialed teachers, academic administrators, and other educators as needed. Information is shared with LEAs and educator preparation programs.

Interest in the teaching profession nationally has decreased, because the teaching profession has become less attractive to young professionals. The current teacher shortage report reflects mathematics as the number one hard-to-fill area. As of 2018, 58 of Alabama's 139 city and county school districts listed difficulty in hiring properly certified mathematics teachers.
As part of its efforts to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the 2021-2022 school, the SEA has implemented the following strategies:

- A statewide electronic application and job posting system available to any applicant in need of a job.
- Several LEAs have used ESSER I and/or ESSER II funds for at least a portion of their staff salaries and benefits. LEAs continued to pay their staff during periods of closure, as was emphasized by the CARES Act.
- Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) program that aims to fill each and every school with credentialed math and science teachers in grades 6-12.
- Alabama Math & Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP), a repayment incentive that pays back a significant portion of the tuition

costs that teachers (and prospective teachers) incur while pursuing their teacher degrees from any of the 26 Alabama in-state colleges and universities. This program targets schools in the Black Belt (low socio-economic) area of Alabama.

- Awareness campaign of alternative, emergency, and provisional certificates.
- The SEA used Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to fund salary or wages for healthcare professionals or aides to provide COVID-19 response and mitigation services at the schools.
- Alternative teaching certificate for certain retired members of the United States Armed Forces to assist with teacher shortages.
- Assisting LEAs with sample recruitment and retention plans.
- Communication campaign designed to increase the number of certified personnel to fill vacancy gaps and recruit individuals to the profession. Continue to implement Alabama's two-year mentoring program for new teachers, pilot additional supports for mentor teachers with national organizations, and review/update the new teacher manual.

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

   In addition to already state- and federally funded LEA/school level positions supporting counselors, school nurses, and special education personnel, the SEA has approved the use of ESSER II funds to hire additional school support personnel. The SEA has established and will continue to develop a number of strategies to support increasing access to support staff at the district level. Recently, the state received funding through the legislature to support mental health coordinators for LEAs.

   The SEA will continue to provide detailed guidance to districts for utilizing various federal funding sources to increase student access to key support staff and will explore expanding granted funds to LEAs beyond school nurses to support the hiring and supplies for key support staff such as school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other support professionals. The SEA will continue to provide technical support to our LEAs to leverage both state and federal resources in efforts to provide increased student access to key specialized student support personnel within school buildings, including school counselors, nurses, social workers, and school psychologists as well as special education personnel. This will be accomplished by hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students.

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).

The SEA primarily relies upon the summative assessments to gather information on student learning at the state level. The grades 2-8 assessment was not administered in school year 2019- 2020 but was administered in school year 2020-2021. Once available, the data will be used to determine student performance. The SEA currently has a data dashboard that houses the department's academic and non-academic data. This system allows for both the SEA and LEA to monitor status and progress on student outcomes. LEAs have capabilities to monitor student level information by viewing information at the

student-level through the SIS.

The SEA houses student- and staff-level data for LEAs to view and verify in the ALSDE Identity Management (AIM) portal. The data must be reviewed and certified via the data governance process. Additionally, representatives on the governance committee gives the agency insight into the capacity at the local level to expand data collection requirements. Once new data collections have been approved by the governance committee, the collection requirements are published in the data governance manual. Through this process the SEA already collects many of the items listed in G.1.i-vi. Our current processes and technical capabilities allow us to expand and collect what we do not currently collect.

The fiscal management system will be used to collect fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels). The SEA will develop a uniform expenditure reporting system to collect detailed information on ARP ESSER expenditures across LEAs. Comparable data will be collected and reported for all LEAs. The SEA will collect jobs created and retained with ARP ESSER funds on an annual basis as part of the LEA's compliance reporting. LEAs will report all FTEs that 1) are funded from ESSER funds, and/or 2) received a stipend or bonus for added responsibilities caused by the pandemic.

The SEA will build capacity of LEAs for participation in summer programs, after-school programs, and extended year programs through grants to the LEAs. These grants will be supported through technical assistance to guide LEAs through the planning processes. SEA will collect data from LEAs to monitor participation in ARP ESSER funded programs, including summer programs, after-school programs, and extended year programs, funded by LEA grants.

The SEA will use the current governance process and systems that are easily expandable to collect the data required based on the program needs once the final requirements are determined.

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.

The SEA will use the eGAP platform to approve the use of federal funds and

ensure compliance to federal regulations. Internal controls within the eGAP system prevent LEAs from submitting applications if the requirements are not followed. This includes reservation requirements of at least 20% of funds used to address learning loss, the appropriate amount of indirect costs, and other business rules, as appropriate.

In efforts to build capacity and safeguard funds for their intended purposes, there is a 3-step approval process at the LEA level, and a 3-step approval process at the SEA level.

The programmatic and financial aspects of monitoring will reside in eGAP. Specific regulations will be observed during regularly scheduled desk audits and compliance monitoring visits. In an effort to build capacity with the LEAs, temporary part-time personnel will work in collaboration with the LEAs on pre-monitoring activities. The SEA process will consist of developing a template to assist LEAs with self-monitoring of federal relief funds to ensure compliance with regulations. The process will include data collection and monitoring for implementation as well as impact.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

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

The data in Table 1 and 2 is reflected as of June 1, 2021.

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.

Number of schools	All schools	Offered to all students	Offered to some students	Not offered
Remote or online only	0	1387	0	0
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	1387	1387	0	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	1387	1387	0	0

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

As of the 4th Nine Weeks (the final attendance period), 100% of all districts and schools in the state offered in-person instruction. The SEA does not currently collect student level data concerning remote/online, hybrid or in-person instruction at the student level. LEAs submit to the SEA the percentage of students per LEA involved in the various forms of instruction delivery and that information is currently posted and available on the SEA's website at the Instructional Delivery Mode link.

The data currently collected is in the aggregate and cannot be disaggregated by subpopulation. The SEA is working within the new SIS that will be fully operational in August of 2021 to include such information so an LEA can see in real-time student level data pertaining to the instructional delivery mode. That data will lead to greater analysis of assessment data, both formative within the LEA and summative at the SEA level to

drive focused improvements among our subpopulations in gap closing. Once the new data set is available in the fall, the SEA will post the data by subpopulation.

Table 2

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

Number of students	Total enrollment	Remote or online only	Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Full-time in-person instruction
Students from low-income families	379,518	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
White, not Hispanic	430,473	# Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Black or African American, not Hispanic	243,498	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Hispanic, of any race	69,471	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Asian, not Hispanic	11,401	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	26,462	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	1,887	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Two or more races, not Hispanic	25,815	# Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Race/Ethnicity information not available	128	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
English learners	33,655	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Children with disabilities	99,266	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*

Students experiencing homelessness	8,658	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Children and youth in foster care	2,797	#Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*
Migratory students	1,224	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*	Data Not Available*

As of the 4th Nine Weeks (the final attendance period), 100% of all districts and schools in the state offered in-person instruction. The SEA does not currently collect student level data concerning remote/online, hybrid or in-person instruction at the student level. LEAs submit to the SEA the percentage of students per LEA involved in the various forms of instruction delivery and that information is currently posted and available at the Instructional Delivery Method link.

The data currently collected is in the aggregate and cannot be disaggregated by subpopulation. SEA is working within the new SIS that will be fully operational in August of 2021 to include such information so an LEA can see in real-time student level data pertaining to the instructional delivery mode. That data will lead to greater analysis of assessment data, both formative within the LEA and summative at the SEA level to drive focused improvements among our subpopulations in gap closing. Once the new data set is available in the fall, the SEA will post the data by subpopulation.

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

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

- How the State is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;
- Overall plans and policies related to State support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;
- Data on each school's mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;

- Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);
- Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;
- Requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act ("FFATA"); and
- Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

Appendix C: Assurances

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

- The SEA will conduct all its operations so that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under the ARP ESSER program or activity based on race, color, national origin, which includes a person's limited English proficiency or English learner status and a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; sex; age; or disability. These non-discrimination obligations arise under Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, the SEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the Department under any of these statutes;
- The SEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements and all requirements of its Grant Award Notification, including but not limited to:
    - Complying with the maintenance of effort provision in section 2004(a)(1) of the ARP Act, absent a waiver by the Secretary pursuant to section 2004(a)(2) of the ARP Act; and
    - Complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(b) of the ARP Act, and ensuring its LEAs comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act (please note that the Department will provide additional guidance on maintenance of equity shortly);
- The SEA will allocate ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the SEA receives ARP ESSER funds (i.e., 60 days from the date the SEA receives each portion of its ARP ESSER funds). An SEA that is not able to allocate such funds within 60 days because it is not practicable (e.g., because of pre-existing State board approval requirements) will provide an explanation to the Department within 30 days of receiving each portion of its ARP ESSER funds (submitted via email to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)), including a description of specific actions the SEA is taking to provide ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and the SEA's expected timeline for doing so;
- The SEA will implement evidence-based interventions as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act and ensure its LEAs implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act;
- The SEA will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity), gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender), English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act, and ensure its LEAs address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups, gender, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and

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

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