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

U.S. Department of Education

Issued: April 21, 2021

OMB Number: 1810-0754
Expiration Date: October 31, 2021

Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ("ARP ESSER") Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan ("ARP") Act of 2021, provides nearly $122 billion to States to support the Nation's schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic. It is particularly important that ARP ESSER funding will enable States and local educational agencies ("LEAs"), and more directly schools, to support students who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to have suffered the most because of longstanding inequities in our communities and schools that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education ("Department") is committed to working in partnership with States so that these unprecedented resources are quickly put to work to ensure students have sustained access to in-person instruction and that the resources are used to provide the effective support students need as they persist through and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The thoughtful and timely use of these funds will have a lasting impact on our Nation's schools and help to address the inequities in resources, services, and opportunities available to our students.

This template presents an opportunity for States to share their plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds with the public. The Department must approve a State educational agency's ("SEA's") plan in order to make the State's remaining ARP ESSER allocation available for use. Please note that the Department intends to issue ARP ESSER reporting requirements separately.

Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below. An SEA may use this template or another format as long as every item and element is addressed in the SEA's response. Throughout this document, questions that refer to an SEA's ARP ESSER funding are referencing the total allocation to be received by the SEA, including that which it allocates to its LEAs.

Each SEA must submit to the Department by **June 7, 2021,** either: (1) its ARP ESSER plan or (2) the State requirements that preclude submission of the plan by that date and a date by which it will be able to submit its complete ARP ESSER plan.

To submit the SEA's plan, please email the plan to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov).

In order to ensure transparency, the Department will post each plan on the Department's website when it is received and will indicate each plan's approval status.

This template also allows States to fulfill the requirement of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations ("CRRSA") Act ESSER II 6-month reporting requirement in section 313(f) of the CRRSA Act.

Cover Page

Grantee and Contact Information

ARP ESSER PR Award Number: S425U210031

SEA Contact: Judy K. Nelson

Telephone: 601-359-3499

Email address: jnelson@mdek12.org

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) **Carey M. Wright, Ed. D.** **State Superintendent of Education**	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative *Carey L. Wright*	Date: 8/6/2021

A. Describing the State's Current Status and Needs

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

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

   Instructional Support for Teachers

   The MDE has launched a statewide initiative to improve access to connected technology, instructional content, and professional learning for teachers through the Mississippi Connects project.

   The MDE has been deliberately focused on increasing access to focused grade-level instruction and supports (including accommodations, modifications, tutorial services, and enrichment) to accelerate learning through the summer and in the upcoming school year. Much of this work has been done through adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), online at www.msinstructionalmaterials.org.

   Social and Emotional Learning

   The MDE has also been working over the last several years to develop social-emotional learning (SEL) standards. MDE staff completed this project during the 2020-21 academic year. The SEL standards, accompanying professional development, and associated resources will provide a framework for teachers to use as they support student emotional wellbeing and foster positive relationships among students. This effort, in conjunction with a telehealth / teletherapy pilot project, focuses on potential mental health concerns that may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The behavioral telehealth project will create an ecosystem of behavioral healthcare delivery system within the school setting that provides mental and behavioral health care to children and increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques by providing access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers. Also, the project will improve access to mental health services by providing in-school mental and behavioral health therapy appointments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equitable Access to Technology

The Mississippi State Legislature approved the Equity In Distance Learning Act (EDLA) to provide distance learning and online services to school districts in Mississippi. Under the legislation, each district was required to develop and submit an EDLA Digital Learning Plan addressing the following:
- **Policy, Teaching and Content**
- **Special Education and Populations**
- **Technical**

Policy Waivers

In an effort to support schools and students the Mississippi State Board of Education approved waivers for the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards to provide districts the flexibility to provide academic services and support to students, while ensuring the safety and well being of local school communities in Mississippi.

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

Internet connectivity is a significant issue for rural and low-income students in a typical academic year, and it has only proven to be a greater barrier during the pandemic. Data for individual states is online at: https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/connect2health/index.html#ll=40,-95&z=4&t=broadband&bbm=fixed_access&dmf=none.

According to CDC data, mental health is a significant issue among K-12 students. In 2019, approximately 1.16% of emergency department visits for children under the age of 18 were related to mental health concerns. During 2020, this increased to 1.67%. Among children ages 12-17, over 4% of emergency department visits were related to mental health concerns in 2020, up from 3% in 2019.

The MDE has also been working over the last several years to develop social-emotional learning (SEL) standards. MDE staff completed this project during the 2020-21 academic year. The SEL standards, accompanying professional development, and associated resources will provide a framework for teachers to use as they support student emotional wellbeing and foster positive relationships among students. This effort, in conjunction with a telehealth / teletherapy pilot project, focuses on potential mental health concerns that may

have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The behavioral telehealth project will create an ecosystem of behavioral healthcare delivery system within the school setting that provides mental and behavioral health care to children and increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques by providing access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers. Also, the project will improve access to mental health services by providing in-school mental and behavioral health therapy appointments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. <u>Identifying Needs of Underserved Students</u>: Describe your State's 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:
     i. Students from low-income families,
    ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),
   iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),
    iv. English learners,
     v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")),
    vi. Students experiencing homelessness,
   vii. Children and youth in foster care,
  viii. Migratory students, and
    ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).

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

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

Without statewide MAAP assessment data disaggregated by subgroup for the 2020-2021 school year, this data is anecdotal - gathered from conversations

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[1] For the purposes of the plan, "academic impact of lost instructional time" refers to "learning loss" experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as referenced in the ARP Act and the CRRSA Act.

with teachers, principals, superintendents, and students through various advisory group meetings and staff conversations with educators.

Absent the data described above, which will be more readily available late in the summer of 2021, the MDE sees the highest priority needs for all students as (1) access to focused grade-level instruction and supports (including accommodations, modifications, tutorial services, and enrichment) to accelerate learning through the summer and in the upcoming school year; and (2) a stable, safe, encouraging, empathetic learning environment where students can openly share their unique experiences from the last year and can receive appropriate supports from counselors, teachers, and – if necessary – mental health professionals.

Table A1.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	*See narrative above*
Students from each racial or ethnic background used by the State for reporting purposes – please add a row for each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	*See narrative above*
Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)	*See narrative above*
English learners	*See narrative above*
Children with disabilities	*See narrative above*
Students experiencing homelessness	*See narrative above*
Children and youth in foster care	*See narrative above*
Migratory students	*See narrative above*
Other groups of students identified by the State (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, LGBTQ+ students)	*See narrative above*

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 MDE will encourage LEAs to utilize available data from state assessments administered in the spring of 2021 to identify specific academic needs of various student groups. Additionally, districts have access to locally administered assessments that may be able to provide insights into subgroup performance. The MDE will also encourage districts to consider participation in the behavioral telehealth and teletherapy pilot project to identify areas of need related to social, emotional, and mental health.

5. <u>School Operating Status</u>: 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 current statewide information system (SIS), which is long overdue for an upgrade, does not capture the operational status or

instructional delivery mode (in-person, hybrid, or online). As a local control state, districts had several options for the delivery of instruction during the 2020-2021 school year, as allowed by [State Board Policy 9.2](#).

The MDE has met with local SIS vendors to determine whether data maybe available through local SIS instances. The MDE does capture enrollment data, but the agency does not capture information by instructional delivery mode. The MDE does collect average daily attendance data, but because mode of instruction data is not currently available in the statewide SIS, disaggregated enrollment data and attendance data by the mode of instruction is also not available. The MDE is considering how to gather such information as a part of a future SIS upgrade.

The number of districts offering face-to-face instruction increased during the spring semester of the 2020-2021 school year, and a cursory review of district information, gather from websites and social media, indicated fewer than five districts in state were likely in a virtual-only mode at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Consistent with guidance for summer 2021 programming, the MDE anticipates that face-to-face instruction will be the primary mode of instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.

The MDE is [moving forward with the adoption of two policies](#) related to specific requirements for virtual learning days and virtual students.

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;

A compilation of guidance, developed in consultation with LEA superintendents and state health officials, is online at https://mdek12.org/guidance2020-21.

Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	*Mask use was mandated by Executive Order of the Governor for the 2020-2021 school year, and it will be an LEA for the 2021-2022 school year.*
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	*Mississippi followed CDC guidelines regarding physical distancing during the 2020-2021 school year. The MDE regularly shared updates on this guidance with LEAs.*
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	*The MDE shared CDC recommendations with districts on handwashing and respiratory etiquette.*
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	*The MDE shared CDC recommendations with LEAs on facilities and provided technical assistance on improving ventilation.*
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	*The MDE shared CDC recommendations with LEAs on contact tracing.*
Diagnostic and screening testing	
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	*The MDE encouraged districts to consider how they might host vaccination drives on campus to ease the burden on staff.*
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	

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;

> *The MDE anticipates that face-to-face instruction will be the primary mode of instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.*
>
> *The MDE is [moving forward with the adoption of two policies](#) related to specific requirements for virtual learning days and virtual students.*

    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

> *The MDE met routinely with state health officials, coordinating several calls between LEAs and state officials. The MDE regularly shared CDC guidance and information from state health officials with LEAs through a daily, then later twice-weekly email update.*

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

> *The MDE shared guidance regularly through the email updates described above, and staff hosted regularly scheduled office hours to meet with LEAs on various topics related to the pandemic, student outcomes, and the safe reopening of schools. A compilation of guidance, developed in consultation with LEA superintendents and state health officials, is online at https://mdek12.org/guidance2020-21.*

2. <u>Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans</u>: Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/ (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on the LEA's website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:

    i. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;

    ii.   How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;

    iii. How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),[2] and revises as appropriate, its plan, and how the SEA will ensure that the LEA seeks public input, and takes such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the revisions to the plan; and

    iv. Describe, to the extent the SEA collects it, information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

> ***The MDE shared [district guidance](#) on the creation of Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans. Based on the questions from this guidance, districts have been developing and approving plans to be posted on their respective websites. Additionally, districts are to send a link to the MDE upon plan approval and subsequent update for inclusion in a [list on the MDE website](#), to include the date of last revision. Guidance includes questions on safe / healthy school environments, but the MDE does not have a mechanism to compile such information from locally-approved plans.***

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

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

    1. <u>SEA Consultation</u>: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
        i. students;

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[2] ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1225(b), and are therefore available to SEAs and LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions of these plans, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.

    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 MDE met regularly with various stakeholder groups during the pandemic to gauge needs and gather feedback around challenges. As a part of these conversations, advisory groups of teachers, students, and administrators had a regular opportunity to discuss instructional, accountability, and operational issues, and to share concerns with MDE staff.

Additionally, the MDE has provided transparent guidance and further opportunities for stakeholders from different backgrounds to provide feedback. Prior to approval of the plan by the State Board of Education, the MDE released the draft plan for feedback.

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

    i.   How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups (including students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);

    Complete the table below or provide a narrative description.

    ESSER I and ESSER II SEA Activities

- *PreK supports for technology integration and adherence to CDC guidelines in the PreK classrooms*
- *Telehealth services to provide mental and behavioral healthcare to children and to increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques*
- *School nurse program to assist in education and care of students and staff*
- *Career and Technical Educator support to provide access to digital CTE curriculum for completion and certification; provide digital work-based learning simulation and remote engagement with industry professionals*
- *Broadcasting support to provide equitable access to lessons via free statewide public broadcasting channel; lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards in grades PreK-12*
- *ESSER Technical Assistance Specialists to provide assistance to LEAs with implementation of ESSER program*
- *Provide technology and connectivity support and adherence to CDC guidelines to Special State Schools*
- *Provide digital literacy coaches to increase implementation of digital learning and instructional practices*
- *Provide technical and network support for digital learning to all LEAs*
- *Provide a variety of education-related services to support the MS-Connects initiative which focused on the challenges of digital learning and to improve student outcomes using educational technology*

GEER I and II

Social & Emotional Support
Priority Task 1.1 Provide or implement research-based programming or curriculum for students that include empirically measurable components to LEAs or education-related entities.
- *University of Southern Mississippi – REACH MS funded at $148,925.00*
- *Mississippi State University (2 projects funded at $416,616.25*
- *Pass Christian Public School District funded at $148,395.71*
- *North MS Education Consortium funded at $1,477,163.50*
- *Lamar County School District funded at $8,811.45*
- *Pontotoc County School District funded at $96,960.00*

Priority Task 1.2: Provide focused Social and Emotional Learning support services focused on at-risk groups such as those students diagnosed with developmental delays including autism and dyslexia.
- *Mississippi State University funded at $316,540.72*
- *Madison County School District funded at $52,000.00*
- *Refill Café d/b/a Refill Jackson Initiative funded at $123,669.70*
- *North MS Education Consortium funded at $170,744.00*
- *Save the Children Federation funded at $460,300.57*
- *MS Children's Home Society funded at $600,931.93*
- *Mississippi Families for Kids funded at $373,170.00*

Priority Task 1.3: Provide telehealth and teletherapy services to address student mental health issues at all levels of education, including providing the platform or application through which professionals may provide telehealth or teletherapy services.
- *Mississippi State University (2 projects) funded at $227,566.60*
- *University of Mississippi funded at $491,144.59*

Online Learning
Priority Task 2.1: Leverage k-12 student access to devices provided through "Mississippi Connects" or other K-12 funding sources to include but not necessarily be limited to one or more of the following:
- *Address existing statewide teacher shortages exacerbated by the pandemic*
- *Address learning loss created or exacerbated by the pandemic*
- *Increase in different styles of learning; and/or*
- *Implement any other innovative practice made possible by 1:1 student access to technology on a local, regional, or state basis, provided that such practice prevents, prepares for, or responds to the pandemic.*
- *Mississippi State University funded at $681,724.72*
- *The Redeemer's School funded at $142,286.33*
- *Brentwood Behavioral Health System funded at $35,624.75*
- *Alliance Health Center funded at $87,978.86*
- *University of Mississippi funded at $2,261,479.83*
- *MS Children's Home Society funded at $142,180.25*
- *Delta Health Alliance funded at $452,951.00*
- *Bay St. Louis Waveland School District funded at $244,631.36*

- *Lobaki funded at $795,859.00*
- *Diamond Grove Center funded at $43,487.56*
- *Parkwood Behavioral Health System funded at $44,374.78*

Priority Task 2.2: Provide or implement high-quality digital instructional materials and academic resources, especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy, for schools implementing online learning at the elementary and secondary level.
- *Western Line School District funded at $106,045.00*
- *Lauderdale County School District funded at $208,224.00*
- *St. Andrews Episcopal School funded at $543,750.00*
- *University of Southern Mississippi funded at $397,789.00*

Priority Task 2.3: Provide or implement high-quality training for students, parents, and/or educators to support effective online learning.
- *Jackson State University funded at $345,200.00*
- *Mississippi Council on Economic Education funded at $508,095.00*
- *Mississippi Children's Museum funded at $567,483.48*
- *University of Mississippi funded at $554,109.33*
- *Mississippi State University (6 projects) funded at $1,186,114.04*
- *Mississippi University for Women funded at $244,035.00*

Priority Task 2.4: Support the credentialing of teachers in online learning through an approved Educator Preparation Program.
- *Mississippi College School of Education funded at $1,114,110.00*
- *University of Southern Mississippi funded at $115,736.00*

Priority Task 2.5: Use rapid credentialing to re-skill or re-train postsecondary workforce training programs persons who have experienced negative job impacts due to the pandemic.

Priority Task 2.6: Support or implement online learning in postsecondary workforce training programs and/or secondary Career and Technical Education through the utilization of innovative hardware and software, including, but not limited to, virtual reality equipment.
- *New Albany School District funded at $58,550.00*
- *United Way of Jackson and George Counties funded at $675,000.00*

- *Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District funded at $100,000.00*
- *Booneville School District funded at $107,000.00*
- *Hinds Community College funded at $1,604,218.00*
- *Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College funded at $1,604,218.00*
- *Mississippi State University funded at $259,625.84*

Priority Task 2.7: Expand awareness of and access to best practices and innovations in online learning in the pandemic context among local and state government decision-makers in order to increase the current and future use of such practices.
- *Mississippi State University funded at $368,167.44*
- *University of Mississippi funded at $503,959.79*

Return to In-Person Learning
Priority Task 3.1: Support the costs of adjusting class schedules to accommodate more in-person classes with appropriate social distancing at the postsecondary education level.
- *Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning funded at $240,000.00*

Priority Task 3.2: Purchase PPE and other mitigating supplies and resources to address the spread of the virus within schools or daycares as the academic year continues.
- *The Redeemer's School funded at $10,621.94*
- *MS Delta Academies funded at $100,000.00*
- *Delta State University funded at $153,500.00*

Priority Task 3.3: For IHEs, provide student financial aid, such as higher education grants and scholarships to students most affected by the pandemic.
- *Jackson State University funded at $230,000.00*
- *University of Southern Mississippi funded at $622,987.00*
- *Mississippi State University funded at $861,637.50*

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	*See Narrative*	

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
Act)		
GEER I (CARES Act)	*See Narrative*	
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	*See Narrative*	
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	*See Narrative*	

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.

All ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been awarded to LEAs through the online grants management system. This system is also used to track LEA obligations and expenditures.

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]

The MDE houses all pertinent COVID-19 information, guidance and supporting documentation in the grants management system. The MDE also provide ongoing trainings and support to LEAs on the uses of funds and planning, and supports LEAS in leveraging

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[3] Please note that the needs of students experiencing homelessness must be addressed (along with the other groups disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) through the use of the ARP ESSER SEA reservations and the required LEA reservation for the academic impact of lost instructional time; the funding provided to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act is in addition to the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds.

their resources to support the whole child and the entire school, including ESSER funds.

The MDE provided additional guidance in identifying homeless students, allowing for McKinney-Vento subgrantees to revise programs to meet the needs of homeless students during the pandemic especially with virtual learning. LEAs who were not McKinney-Vento recipients utilized Title I-Part A funds to address identified needs of homeless students. LEAs will also receive additional support through the ARP Homeless program.

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;

      The MDE anticipates using funds reserved under section 2001(f)(1) to support high-dosage tutoring, summer learning and enrichment and extended day programs through a competitive RFP process. As a requirement of the RFP, the MDE expects to have providers track and demonstrate effectiveness to evaluate impact.

   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

The MDE will examine MAAP data in late summer 2021, as available, to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students. This information will be helpful as districts consider which evidence-based interventions may best support various student groups. The MDE will use the state reservation funds to support intervention activities.

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.

While data is anecdotal, the MDE has heard from LEAs that students who were remote learners were more likely to be unengaged or absent from virtual classes than their in-person peers during the 2020-2021 school year. While the MDE cannot track in-person instruction of students due to limitations with the statewide SIS, the MDE does plan to continue to offer professional development on chronic absenteeism during the 2021-2022 school year in an effort to engage these students and their families.

2. <u>Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs</u>: 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;

    The MDE anticipates using funds reserved under section 2001(f)(1) to support high-dosage tutoring, summer learning and enrichment and extended day programs through a competitive RFP process. The expectations of these programs will be similar to those of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, with a focus on academic enrichment. As a requirement of the

RFP, the MDE expects to have providers track and demonstrate effectiveness to evaluate impact.

The MDE has also been working over the last several years to develop social-emotional learning (SEL) standards. MDE staff completed this project during the 2020-21 academic year. The [SEL standards](), accompanying professional development, and [associated resources]() will provide a framework for teachers to use as they support student emotional wellbeing and foster positive relationships among students. This effort, in conjunction with a telehealth / teletherapy pilot project, focuses on potential mental health concerns that may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The behavioral telehealth project will create an ecosystem of behavioral healthcare delivery system within the school setting that provides mental and behavioral health care to children and increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques by providing access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers. Also, the project will improve access to mental health services by providing in-school mental and behavioral health therapy appointments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The MDE will examine MAAP data in late summer 2021, as available, to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students. This information will be helpful as districts consider which evidence-based interventions may best support various student groups. The MDE will use the state reservation funds to support intervention activities.

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.

While data is anecdotal, the MDE has heard from LEAs that students who were remote learners were more likely to be unengaged or absent from virtual classes than their in-person

peers during the 2020-2021 school year. While the MDE cannot track in-person instruction of students due to limitations with the statewide SIS, the MDE does plan to continue to offer professional development on chronic absenteeism during the 2021-2022 school year in an effort to engage these students and their families.

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

    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;

    The MDE anticipates using funds reserved under section 2001(f)(1) to support high-dosage tutoring, summer learning and enrichment and extended day programs through a competitive RFP process. The expectations of these programs will be similar to those of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, with a focus on academic enrichment. As a requirement of the RFP, the MDE expects to have providers track and demonstrate effectiveness to evaluate impact.

    The MDE has also been working over the last several years to develop social-emotional learning (SEL) standards. MDE staff completed this project during the 2020-21 academic year. The [SEL standards](#), accompanying professional development, and [associated resources](#) will provide a framework for teachers to use as they support student emotional wellbeing and foster positive relationships among students. This effort, in conjunction with a telehealth / teletherapy pilot project, focuses on potential mental health concerns that may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The behavioral telehealth project will create an ecosystem of behavioral healthcare delivery system within the school setting that provides mental and behavioral health care to children and increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques by providing access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers. Also, the project will improve access to mental health services by providing in-school mental and behavioral health therapy appointments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

__The MDE will examine MAAP data in late summer 2021, as available, to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students. This information will be helpful as districts consider which evidence-based interventions may best support various student groups. The MDE will use the state reservation funds to support intervention activities.__

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.

__While data is anecdotal, the MDE has heard from LEAs that students who were remote learners were more likely to be unengaged or absent from virtual classes than their in-person peers during the 2020-2021 school year. While the MDE cannot track in-person instruction of students due to limitations with the statewide SIS, the MDE does plan to continue to offer professional development on chronic absenteeism during the 2021-2022 school year in an effort to engage these students and their families.__

4. <u>Emergency Needs</u>: 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.

__The MDE does not plan to reserve funds for emergency needs.__

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. <u>LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds</u>: 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 MDE has taken the necessary actions to ensure the LEAs meet all ARP ESSER requirements, including developing an application in the grants management system that will indicate the use of funds with required focus areas, requiring the LEAS to certify the ARP ESSER assurances by the required deadlines. The LEA ARP ESSER Application in the grants management system will automatically require the LEA allocation to budget for those set aside purposes and focus area.

2. <u>LEA Consultation</u>: Describe how the SEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, ensure that, consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements], its LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

    i.   students;
   ii.   families;
  iii.   school and district administrators (including special education
           administrators); and
   iv.   teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their
           unions.

The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:

    i.   Tribes;
   ii.   civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
  iii.   stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities,
          English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and
          youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are
          incarcerated, and other underserved students.

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

The ARP ESSER application contains a section called "ARP ESSER Planning Team." In this section, the LEA will include members of the planning team and titles and how the LEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders. The LEA is required to include how the LEA provided the public an opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds.

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;

       The Office of Federal Programs and Grants Management in conjunction with other academic offices will provide training and resources to support LEAs in implementing evidence-based interventions.

       The Offices of Federal Programs and Grants Management will work with an external vendor to monitor and evaluate the ARP ESSER program. A tool will be developed to evaluate the implementation of evidence-based interventions. Data will be

collected to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented interventions.

    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

    There will be an indicator to specifically address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on student groups as outlined in A.3.i.-viii. Training and resources will be provided to the LEAs. A tool will be developed to monitor how the LEAs implemented strategies to address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on each subgroup of students.

    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.

    There will be an indicator to specifically address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on student groups as outlined in A.3.i.-viii. Training and resources will be provided to the LEAs to identify, reengage, and support students who have experienced significant learning loss. A tool will be developed to monitor how the LEAs implemented strategies to address learning loss.

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 various training and guidance to ensure all students are provided resources that establish equitable opportunities to learn. Specific equity resources will be provided to ensure LEAs are implementing strategies to ensure equitable access to learning.
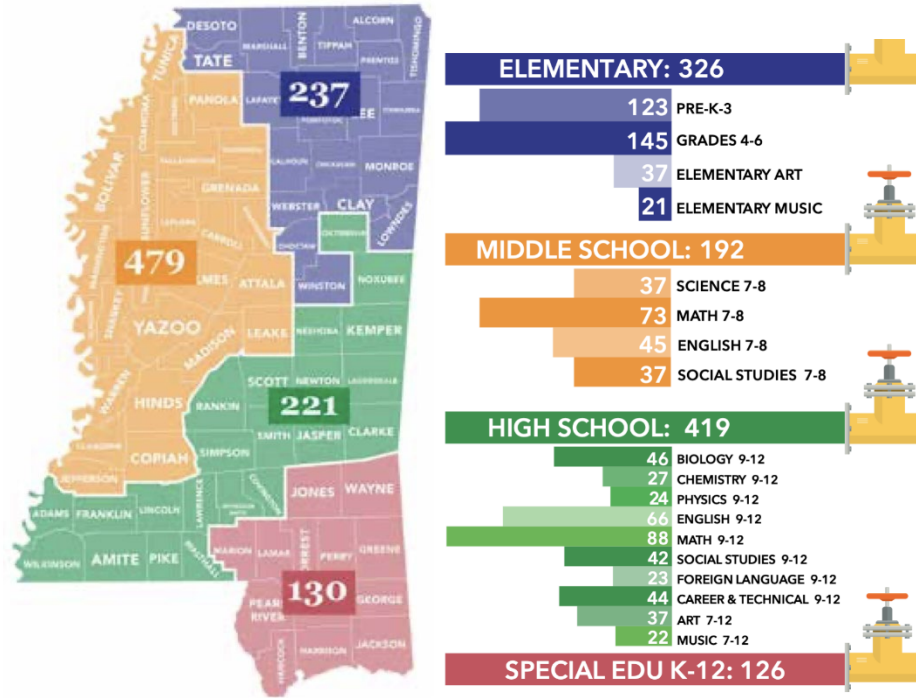
F. Supporting the Educator Workforce

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. <u>Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce</u>:
    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.

    Complete the table below, changing or adding additional rows as needed, or provide a narrative description.

    In 2018, the Office of Teaching and Leading (OTL) conducted a shortage survey to assess Mississippi's educator landscape. The survey highlighted geographic shortages in Congressional District 2, which largely encompasses the Mississippi Delta, and subject area-specific shortages in elementary grades PreK-6 along with secondary mathematics. The OTL will administer the shortage survey again this summer and anticipates that these trends have not only continued but were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ELEMENTARY: 326
123 PRE-K-3
145 GRADES 4-6
37 ELEMENTARY ART
21 ELEMENTARY MUSIC

MIDDLE SCHOOL: 192
37 SCIENCE 7-8
73 MATH 7-8
45 ENGLISH 7-8
37 SOCIAL STUDIES 7-8

HIGH SCHOOL: 419
46 BIOLOGY 9-12
27 CHEMISTRY 9-12
24 PHYSICS 9-12
66 ENGLISH 9-12
88 MATH 9-12
42 SOCIAL STUDIES 9-12
23 FOREIGN LANGUAGE 9-12
44 CAREER & TECHNICAL 9-12
37 ART 7-12
22 MUSIC 7-12

SPECIAL EDU K-12: 126

Additionally, the MDE has partnered with the CEEDAR Center at the University of Florida to assess and address special educator shortages. Districts are currently reporting 221 special education vacancies statewide, which is an increase from 126 in 2018. Based on feedback from parents, teachers, principals, special education directors, university faculty, MDE program offices, and other stakeholders, the MDE is launching a mentoring and induction pilot with 8 districts through the support of the CEEDAR Center. This pilot is intended to target early career special educator support and retention.

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.

The OTL will launch its 2020-2021 shortage survey in July to identify the most urgent areas of shortages and will provide guidance for LEAs facing the most significant needs through its human capital planning process. These human capital plans may be submitted to meet accreditation process standard two and thereby avoiding noncompliance findings for the requirements to

ensure the professional staff in each school is comprised of no more than 5% of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) units are working outside the area or areas of endorsement.

The MDE's Office of Professional Development (OPD) has also expanded access to high-quality professional learning through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous professional learning opportunities. All LEAs may access professional learning sessions though the MDE's professional development calendar and priority is given to those schools that are identified as CSI, ATSI, or TSI for specialized sessions and ongoing coaching.

Given the instructional demands of shifting to fully virtual and/or hybrid learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mississippi Board of Education approved MDE's recommendation to suspend strict compliance with the requirement for districts to submit Professional Growth System observation scores at the end of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years in an effort to avoid layoffs. Similarly, the OTL offered a one-year extension for all licensure renewals in recognition of the limited professional learning opportunities needed for renewal during the pandemic. Perhaps most significantly, the State Board of Education also approved the MDE's recommendation to waive the licensure testing criterion requirement through December 31, 2021 due to testing center closures. Additionally, the Board waived EPP program entrance testing requirements as well. Since the criterion waiver took effect, educator preparation providers report an overall increase in admission to programs.

The MDE convened a working group of EPP faculty and deans to redesign alternate route programs to ensure greater rigor and support for candidates earning licensure through alternate preparation. In response to statewide shortages in elementary education, the working group co-constructed an alternate route program for elementary education for which the MDE will be seeking approval for a new Master of Arts in Teaching program K-6. The MDE plans to also seek approval for an elementary education supplemental endorsement for educators currently holding a 5-year renewable license. To assist in recruiting candidates for alternate routes, the MDE collaborated with EPPs during 2020 and hosted virtual recruitment fairs.

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).

The 2019-2020 teacher attrition survey revealed that approximately 360 teachers intended to leave their current position as the result health and safety concerns due to COVID-19. As a result, the OTL will continue and hopes to expand its Mississippi Teacher Residency (MTR) and Performance-Based Licensure (PBL) pilots during the 2021-2022 school year. These pilot programs are part of the MDE's strategy to increase educator diversity and effectiveness statewide. Currently, 66% of MTR candidates identify as educators of color and 100% of PBL candidates identify as Black or African American. MTR candidates are averaging three times the number of clinical hours under the supervision of a high-quality mentor teacher due to the program's residency model; meanwhile, PBL candidates are currently outpacing their traditionally licensed peers on Professional Growth System summative scores. The MDE therefore has data to suggest that both models may have important implications for increasing access to effective educators, particularly for students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The Division of Educator Preparation strengthened program review processes to ensure EPPs address how licensure programs prepare candidates with the critical skills necessary for developing the ability to use students' cultural and linguistic diversity as assets to support K12 learning.

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

The MDE has launched a behavioral telehealth project in response to mental health concerns that may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The behavioral telehealth project will create an ecosystem of behavioral healthcare delivery system within the school setting that provides mental and behavioral health care to children and increase educator knowledge about behavioral management techniques by providing access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers. Also, the project will improve access to mental health services by providing in-school mental and behavioral health therapy appointments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Technical assistance has been provided on the use of funds to support additional personnel who may provide direct services to students.

The MDE has awarded 25 School Nurse Grants in response to personal health and safety concerns that may have been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The employment of additional school nurses puts medical staff on site and provides for direct student interaction when needed. School nurse grants will help combat Covid-19 by implementing a coordinated health services program

which includes nursing care, health education to students/staff, and other services as needed by the recipients to combat COVID-19.

In addition, the MDE is providing additional supports for key support staff through the revision of its Professional Growth System rubrics. The Professional Growth Rubric for Special Education Teachers is cross-walked to the High Leverage Practices; meanwhile, the Professional Growth Rubric for Counselors is cross-walked to the American School Counselor Association standards. Together, these rubrics are intended to provide administrators and educators with an aligned 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:

    The MDE will rely on district surveys to collection data regarding the use of ARP ESSER funds, at least through the spring of 2022. The MDE is working to update data collections to capture data related to use of ARP ESSER funds as part of the monthly data reporting to the statewide SIS beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

    i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic; state assessment but may not be available; LEAs purchase their own benchmark assessments; assessment waiver (tracking).
    ii. Opportunity to learn measures
        a. chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline;

> b. access to and participation in advanced coursework;
> c. access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology;
> d. access to high-quality educators;
> e. access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists (work area codes for counts of positions);
> f. 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);
The MDE annually collects district and school-level expenditure data through Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS). This data is disaggregated by expenditure function, object, and source of funding. This data is publicly available and provides the opportunity to compare across LEAs and schools.

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).

2. <u>Monitoring and Internal Controls</u>: 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 MDE Offices of Federal Programs and Grants Management will work collaboratively to manage and monitor the Emergency Impact Aid grant program. The Office of Federal Programs staff will manage the evaluation of the subaward application and budget including any budget amendments, monitoring the LEA's implementation of the grant, and completing any required grant reporting. The current Executive Director of Federal Programs will be responsible for carrying out the grant responsibilities.

The Office of Grants Management will be responsible for distributing funds to the approved subgrantee, processing its payments, and maintaining applicable fiscal controls. The current Executive Director of Grants Management will be responsible for overseeing the distribution of funds and management of payments.

The Offices of Federal Programs and Grants Management will work with an external vendor to increase the capacity for monitoring of all ESSER programs which will include the development of the monitoring tool, corrective actions, and training to the LEA.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

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

Click here to enter text.

Table 1

In the most recent time period available, how many schools in your State offered each mode of instruction or learning model described below? Each row should account for all schools in your State, so that, for each row, the sum of the numbers in the "offered to all students," "offered to some students," and "not offered" columns is equal to the number in the "all schools" column.

Add or change rows as needed

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

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

Table 2

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

Add or change rows as needed

Number of students	Total enrollment	Remote or online only	Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Full-time in-person instruction

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	#	#	#	#
White, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
Black or African American, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
Hispanic, of any race	#	#	#	#
Asian, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
Two or more races, not Hispanic	#	#	#	#
Race/Ethnicity information not available	#	#	#	#
English learners	#	#	#	#
Children with disabilities	#	#	#	#
Students experiencing homelessness	#	#	#	#
Children and youth in foster care	#	#	#	#
Migratory students	#	#	#	#

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).

Appendix D

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Educations General Education Provisions Act ("GEPA") that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access to, or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Click here to enter text.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.