

Montana ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for Montana: \$ 382,019,236

ARP ESSER funding released to Montana on March 24, 2021: \$254,679,491

ARP ESSER funding released to Montana on August 5, 2021: \$127,339,745

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 146,252

Top Priorities within Montana's plan:

- Student mental health
- Integrating social and emotional learning
- Addressing the impact of lost instructional time

Highlights of Montana's plan:

- **Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) worked with districts, local county health departments, and their governing school boards to develop plans to address COVID-19 in the 2021-2022 school year.
- **Addressing the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time, Investing in Summer Learning and Expanding Afterschool Programs:** OPI has allocated funds to school districts to invest in evidence-based programs and is providing tools to help school districts decide how to select interventions. OPI will provide a variety of sustained, multi-tiered systems of supports, professional learning, data support, and technical assistance opportunities to school districts to support their academic impact plans and implementation. OPI will use the Opportunity to Learn Survey collected in May 2021 and the Professional Needs Survey collected in February 2021, along with data collected at the local level, to identify student groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Districts will submit specific action plans to target those students, such as afterschool or summer school programs. The OPI is also partnering with community-based organizations like the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and local libraries to support summer and afterschool programs.
- **Expanding Summer Enrichment Opportunities:** OPI is developing summer enrichment opportunities for Montana students based on student-driven interests and purpose. The first student film festival will be held the Summer of 2022 and will be enhanced with after school workshops developing student interests and skills in digital media and communication. The Montana Arts Council, the Department of Labor, the Chamber of Commerce, and Reach Higher are all partners in this effort. OPI will release a summer enrichment planning guide for public and nonpublic schools and communities the fall of 2021.
- **Supporting Students' and Educators Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs:** Social, emotional, and behavioral supports and guidance are embedded throughout resources published by OPI. OPI also held virtual meetings for the Montana School Counselors Association that continued throughout spring 2020 focusing on school counseling, screening, and social emotional learning in partnership with the Montana School Counselors Association. Additionally, OPI is encouraging schools to utilize the additional funding received from COVID-19 relief to add personnel to their schools as deemed necessary through local needs assessments, including counselors.
- **Community Engagement and Consultation:** OPI utilized surveys, webinars, and stakeholder meetings to engage the community on the ARP ESSER plan. OPI sought public input, meeting

with Tribal groups, education advocates, legislators, the Montana Small School Association, the Montana Rural School Association, and Community Learning Centers. This engagement informed the development of the ARP ESSER plan.

- **When Montana LEA Use of Funds Plans Were Due:** June 7, 2021