

Appendix A

Letters of Support for the North Dakota ARP State ESSER Plan

June 4, 2021

Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

Dear Ms. Baesler:

As the North Dakota Department of Health's (NDDoH) State Health Officer, it is my honor to support the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (NDDPI) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) submission.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDDoH participated as a collaborative partner on the North Dakota Healthy Return to Learning (HRTL) team. This team was comprised of diverse subject matter experts in public health and K-12 education who collaborated with other state and local agencies to provide resources, processes, and strategies to keep schools operating in their dual mission of high-quality education for all students while ensuring effective public health.

The NDDoH commends the NDDPI on its outstanding support to schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and commits to continued collaboration to keep North Dakota students and staff healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Nizar Wehbi, MD, MPH, MBA
State Health Officer

North Dakota State Teacher of the Year Chapter

Be a positive voice for North Dakota Teachers and promote effective education for all students.

June 4, 2021

State School Superintendent Kirsten Baesler
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

Dear Superintendent Baesler,

The vision of the North Dakota State Teacher of the Year Chapter is to be a positive voice for North Dakota teachers by promoting effective education for all students. We support the North Dakota APR ESSER plan submitted by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. We believe this plan sets forth the resources, support, and guidance for North Dakota school district leaders to make the critical decisions required to promote effective education for all students and teachers during this time of increased need in all schools.

As stated in the submitted plan, school leaders, teachers, students, and their families have made tremendous efforts to ensure that learning has continued through the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move forward, we believe this plan will guide district leaders to identify and fill learning gaps and support teachers as they meet the needs of each of their students. The plan also provides recommendations and guidelines for districts to strengthen the positive teaching and learning discoveries that were realized during the past two years.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, members of our group have met regularly with you, Superintendent Baesler, to ask and answer questions and share our concerns, ideas, and experiences. We have valued the opportunity to add our insights to those of other stakeholders in our state. We believe the voice of teacher representatives is a crucial component of building a plan that so directly impacts learning in our state.

Respectfully,

The North Dakota State Teacher of the Year Chapter

Mary Eldredge Sandbo, President | meldreae@minot.com | 701.721.8762

Andrea Fox, Vice President

Amy Neal, Secretary

Linda Hope, Treasurer



125 Slate Drive STE 7 Bismarck, ND 58503

6/1/2021

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter from the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders representing school administrators and directors (including School Superintendents, Secondary/Middle level Principals, Elementary Principals, County Superintendents, School Business Officials, Technology Leaders, CTE Directors, Athletic Directors, Special Education Directors, and Regional Education Association Leaders, echoes our support for the State of North Dakota's SEA response plan in relation to federal support with ESSER dollars.

Our organization has spent significant time working with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, assisting in gleaning feedback, providing feedback, developing and vetting solid state supported interventions to support our schools and our students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan set forth by the NDDPI is high quality, carefully crafted, and supported by stakeholders throughout the state.

Much work has been done, and much is yet to be done to support our students, our state, and our nation as we recover from this pandemic. What you see in the ND plan echoes what our state can and is able to accomplish in these few short years to not only recover, but to come out farther ahead after the crisis than we were before. We are dedicated to take the lessons of COVID and make them the spring board to greater success. As stated by some of our brightest in the state – "no sense in wasting a good pandemic."

We believe the results we will see in ND will lead the nation driving positive student outcomes in all the manners described in the plan, all while honoring our North Dakota citizens and ensuring all voices have a chance to be heard.

(b) (6)

Dr. Aimee Copas

Executive Director

North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders

From: Dr. Mark Hagerott, Chancellor of the North Dakota University System

Date: June 3, 2021

Re: Support for NDDPI State Plan for Educational Aid

The North Dakota University System wishes to convey our support of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's state plan for proposed use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

The proposed plan contains several components that not only support accelerated learning recovery for students who have been impacted by COVID 19 but additionally support students' preparation for college or entry into a workforce or military career. The state plan cites numerous K-12 initiatives with substantial emphasis on the academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs of students. Over 4,000 North Dakota high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors are enrolled in dual credit programs of study at the state's public colleges and universities. In addition, the North Dakota University System is highly dependent on high school graduates continuing their education at one of the state's post-secondary institutions. The North Dakota University System benefits immensely from K-12 students who are well-prepared in all aspects of their lives, despite the setback of the pandemic.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's plan identifies several priorities that are similar to the educational concerns of the North Dakota University System. The earlier those priorities can be addressed, the better for students. The North Dakota University System is wholeheartedly supportive of NDDPI's proposed plan and use of ESSER funds to facilitate a post-pandemic return to normalcy.

Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions regarding our support for the enclosed state plan.

June 7, 2021

Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

Subject: ARP ESSER State Plan

Dear Superintendent Baesler,

On behalf of the North Dakota Department of Human Services team, I am pleased to write this letter of support for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) State Plan, which is focused on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on children, families and their school communities.

The pandemic has affected children and families differently and many needs persist. Those families that were already struggling with poverty, housing and/or food insecurity, behavioral health needs, health and disability-related issues, and other unstable family situations before the pandemic, continue to struggle the most at this stage of the recovery. Over the past year, other families have faced new destabilizing challenges and stressors for the first time, while others with more advantages may feel that life is almost "back to normal." The most vulnerable and the newly vulnerable need our state's continued support and focus.

In the North Dakota Department of Human Services, we take a person-centered approach to services. We appreciate that the ARP ESSER State Plan addresses learning recovery together with other student health and well-being needs in a student-centered way that leverages evidence-based practices, state and local collaboration, and community resources.

Throughout the pandemic we have been honored to work together as one with you and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) and other agencies to support children and families. Specific partnerships with NDDPI include Pandemic-EBT to address food insecurity and behavioral health training, resources and learning communities to aid North Dakota schools and school behavioral health resource coordinators in supporting the behavioral health needs of students and staff. Our most recent investments will ensure more North Dakota children ages 0-4 have access to quality early education experiences so they enter kindergarten school-ready. Helping children reach their potential in school and life begins with quality early experiences.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

GOVERNOR
Doug Burgum

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Christopher Jones

The department remains concerned about the impact the pandemic has had on the most vulnerable learners and their families. As we work to create smooth transitions between pre-K, school and post-secondary services and support for children with disabilities and their families, DHS greatly appreciates the investment in special education units for professional development and staff training focused on positive emotional and evidence-based behavioral supports and interventions.

As a service partner, we are especially in favor of other provisions in the ARP ESSER plan promoting early intervention and prevention, family engagement and parent skill building, and other mitigation strategies to promote social, emotional well-being and child and family resilience.

We appreciate NDDPI's extensive and ongoing support and open communication with local schools and believe the state's education and health and human services systems are well-positioned to help families overcome the challenges created by the pandemic.

Our communities are stronger when all people can realize their full potential. We are pleased to support building up children, families and other individuals and building stronger communities.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Chris Jones
Executive Director

Appendix D

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 06/30/2023)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

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

Section 427 of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA) requires all applicants for federal funds provide a description of the steps the applicant proposes to ensure equitable access to and participation in these federal programs for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: Gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. NDDPI adds this requirement to any application for Federal

funds and will do this for ESSER III applications. Then, NDDPI has program staff monitor districts for compliance by determining whether a district has safeguards in place to prevent barriers for students, teachers, etc. from access and participation in program activities. In addition, NDDPI, through a thorough evaluation of statewide data, has determined that opportunity gaps in academic achievement do exist in North Dakota. Due to this, NDDPI has a strategic continuous improvement process to ensure that funds will be provided to projects that will meet the diverse needs of students of all subgroups. NDDPI assures that no student or teacher will be denied participation to any activity based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age and will use grant funds to improve overall understanding and practices for students experiencing poverty, trauma, and other social emotional issues to ensure all students no matter gender, race, national origin, disability or age are served. NDDPI is committed to ensuring all students and teachers have sufficient access to educational opportunities, technology supports, and services regardless of gender, race, national origin, disability or age that allow for optimal learning and personal growth.

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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.